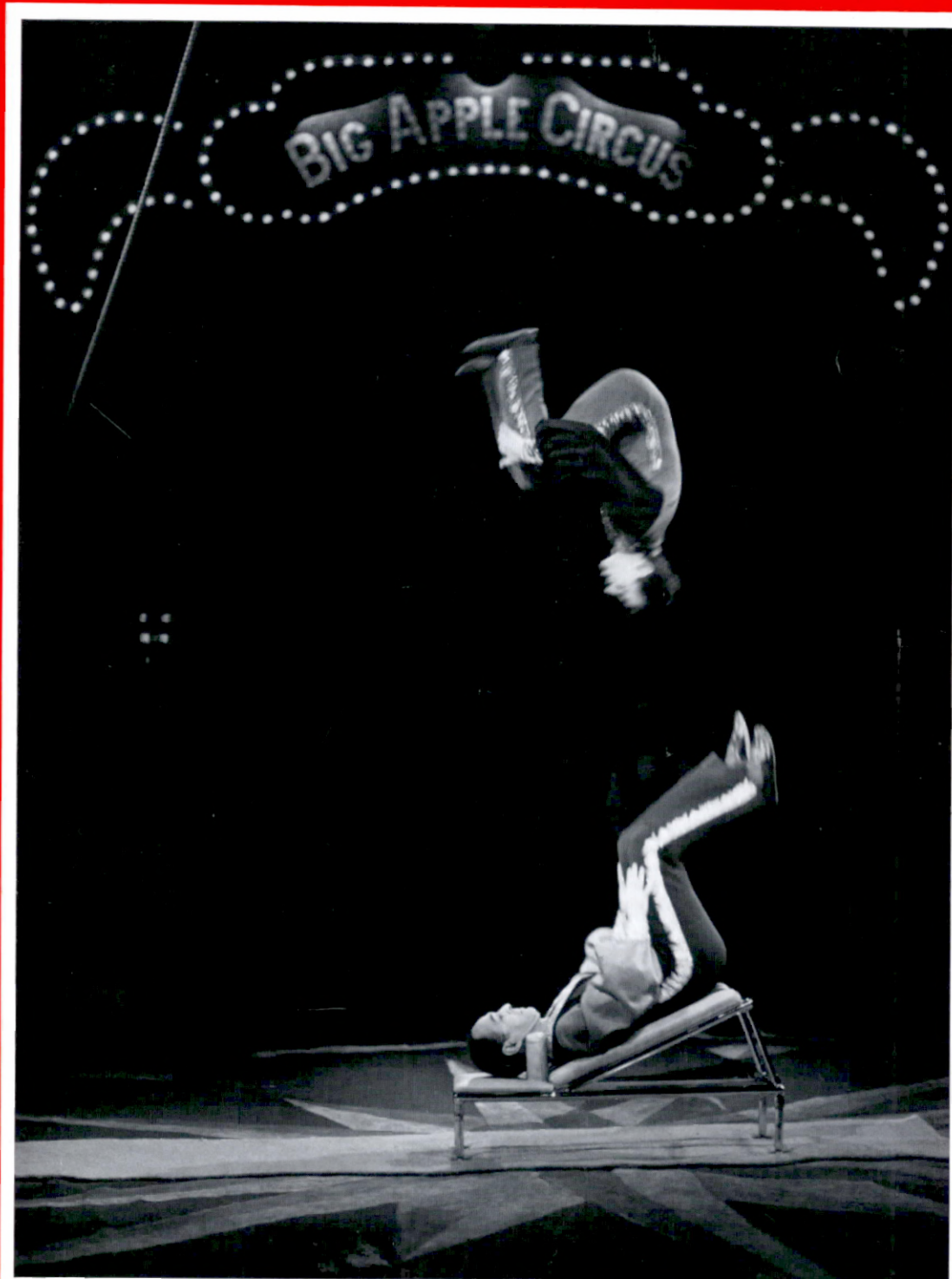


# Bandwagon

THE JOURNAL OF  
THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1992





# BANDWAGON

## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 36, No. 1

January-February 1992

FRED D. PFENING, JR., EDITOR

Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor-Bill Biggerstaff, Production and Graphics  
Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

BANDWAGON, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005 4968), is published bi-monthly. Second class postage paid at Columbus, OH. Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$95.00, half page \$55.00, quarter page \$35.00. Minimum ad is \$20.00. The BANDWAGON is produced using a Macintosh IIcx computer, DesignStudio and TypeStyler software.

Subscription rates, \$19.00 to members and non-members in the United States, \$22.00 per year outside the United States. Single copies \$3.00 plus \$2.00 postage. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BANDWAGON, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212.

Offices of the Circus Historical Society are located at 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081.

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY-John F. Polacsek, President, 5980 Lannoo, Detroit, MI 48236; Fred Dahlinger, Jr., Vice President, 451 Roblee Rd., Baraboo, WI 53913; Dale C. Haynes, Secretary-Treasurer, 3477 Vienna Ct., Westerville, OH 43081.

DIRECTORS: Div. 1-Fred D. Pfening, Jr., 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221 (Ohio-Mich.-Ind.); Div. 2-Copeland MacAllister, 30 Salem End Rd., #2A, Framingham, MA 01701 (N.H.-Maine-Vt.-Mass.-Ct.-Del.-R.I.); Div. 3-William L. Rhodes, 2528 Taylorsville Rd., Louisville, KY 40205 (N.Y.-N.J.-Pa.-Md.-D.C.-Va.-W. Va.-Ky.); Div. 4-Joseph T. Bradbury, 1453 Ashwoody Ct., N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319 (N.C.-S.C.-Ga.-Ala.-Fla.-Miss.-Tenn.-Ark.-La.); Div. 5-Guy J. Fiorenza, 2025 Andrews St., Rockford, IL 61103 (Wis.-Ill.-Minn.-Iowa-Mo.); Div. 6-Orin C. King, 5225 SW 20 Terrace #302, Topeka, KS 66604 (N.D.-S.D.-Kan.-Neb.-Okla.-Tex.); Div. 7-Joseph S. Rettinger, P.O. Box 20371, Phoenix, AZ 85036 (Col.-Mont.-Ida.-Wyo.-N.M.-Utah-Nev.-Ariz.); Div. 8-Michael D. Sporrer, 14537 N.E. 40th St. #H202, Bellevue, WA 98007 (Wa.-Ore.-Ca.-Hawaii); Div. 9-Dr. Gordon D. Brown, 7459 Saskatchewan Dr., Edmonton, Alb., Can. T6G-2A5 (All countries outside the United States)

### THIS MONTH'S COVER

Michel and Mehdi Rios knocked out audiences at the Big Apple Circus during its recent Lincoln Center engagement. One of the top Risley acts in the world, the Rios brothers won a Silver Clown at the 1976 Monte Carlo Circus Festival. Photograph by Holton Rower.

### NEW MEMBERS

Heidi Holley 305 W. 15th St. N. Newton, IA 50208	3743
Dr. Russel E. Bachert, Jr. 418 N. Main St. Hendersonville, NC 28791	3744
Mark Pulda 5078 Mary Drew Dr. Racine, WI 53132	3745
Mark Pulkownik 4008 S. Herman St. Milwaukee, WI 53207	3746
Sandy Weber 585 Skokie Ave. Highland Park, IL 60036	3747
Joseph A. Manier 6822 Lakecrest Ct. Ft. Wayne, IN 46815	3748

### REINSTATED

Stanley Weber 2124 Central Park Ave. Yonkers, NY 10710	2364
--	------

### 1991 CHS ELECTION RESULTS

President	
John Polacsek	150
Fred D. Pfening Jr.	1
Vice-President	
Fred Dahlinger	150
Secretary-Treasurer	
Dale C. Haynes	150
Al Conover	1
Directors	
Division 1	
Fred D. Pfening, Jr.	23
Fred D. Pfening III	1
Dale A. Riker	1
Division	
Copeland MacAllister	19
Division 3	
Bill Rhodes	36
Don Kowell	1
Division 4	
Joseph T. Bradbury	20
Division 5	
Guy Fiorenza	19
Division 6	
Orin King	8
Division 7	
Joe Rettinger	7
Division 8	

Mike Sporrer 17  
Division 9  
Gordon Brown 0

Respectfully submitted, Fred D. Pfening  
III, February 12, 1991

### REGARDING DUES NOTICES

The 1992 CHS dues and membership notices will be mailed in early April. Secretary-Treasurer Dale C. Haynes asks that you not send your payment until you received the notice and return envelope.

### 1992 CHS CONVENTION

The Circus Historical Society will be combining with the Joel E. Warner Top of the Circus Fans Association to bring a great circus event to Clare, Michigan August 20-22. It will be a chance to participate in the tradition of families and family reunions—the theme of this year's event. Three special circus families will be honored: Pat White, a Clare native and noted wild animal trainer for Carson & Barnes Circus; the Miller family of Carson & Barnes and the family of clowns.

CHS presentations on family circuses would be in order to coincide with the theme. Tentative plans are to have historical papers on Thursday, presentations on Friday with an evening banquet, a parade and performance of Carson & Barnes and the CHS auction in the evening on Saturday.

### AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES OF BANDWAGON

1966-Jan.-Feb.  
1967-July-Aug., Nov.-Dec.  
1968-All but Jan.-Feb.  
1969-Jan.-Feb., July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.  
1970-All but July-Aug., Sept.-Oct.  
1971-All but May-June.  
1972-All available.  
1973-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.  
1974-1975-All available.  
1976-All but Jan.-Feb., Nov.-Dec.  
1977-All but Mar.-Ap.  
1978-84-All available.  
1985-All but Nov.-Dec.  
1986-91-All available.

Price is \$3.00 each.  
Add \$2.00 postage one issue,  
\$3.00 more than one issue.  
Please select substitutes in case  
we are out of any of above.

**BANDWAGON BACK ISSUES**  
2515 DORSET RD.  
COLUMBUS, OH 43221



Clare, Michigan is located north of Lansing on Route 27. The headquarters for this year's convention will be the Doherty Motor Hotel. The Doherty was opened in 1924 and has excellent dining facilities. The convention rate will be \$55 for a double occupancy room, including breakfast on weekday mornings.

Those sending early reservations should include a check for one night's lodging. Doherty Motor Hotel's address is Clare, Michigan 48617, phone (800) 525-4115.

A film festival will be held for those arriving on August 19. A capacity crowd is expected, and part of it will be immortalized when an aerial photograph is taken of clowns surrounding the massive five ring Carson & Barnes big top.

#### CHS DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

A new CHS membership roster is now available. All members and current addresses as of November 1991 are listed. Members can obtain a copy without charge by writing the editor at 2515 Dorset Road, Columbus, Ohio 43221.



Do you have our current "G" catalog?

If not you are missing out.

We carry the best in "HO" and "O" Circus Kits, Books, Posters and collectibles.

We've got something for everybody.

Send \$4.00 to:

#### CIRCUS STAR SUPPLIES

3037 Grass Valley Hwy.  
Auburn, CA 95603

#### COLLECTOR WILL BUY

CIRCUS  
CARNIVAL  
WILD WEST  
LITHOGRAPHS  
POSTERS  
MEMORABILIA

cir. 1800 to 1940  
Single or entire collection

Contact:

Allan C. Hill or  
Joe Glasgow  
c/o 2477 Stickney Pt. Rd. #311B  
Sarasota, FL 34231  
Phone: 1-813-923-4758

## CIRCUS PHOTOS - VOLUME 1

### E. J. Kelty Originals

Reproduced from the original 10" x 20" negatives in the Dunn-Tibbals Collection. Printed full size in black ink from 175 line halftones. Twenty panoramic views, suitable for framing. Packaged in handsome photo cover portfolio.

To order: Send \$30.00 p. p.

#### CIRCUS PHOTOS

P. O. Box 553, Englewood, FL 34295-0553  
(Make checks payable to Bob MacDougall)

#### GERMAN NATIONAL



IN THE TRUE EUROPEAN CIRCUS TRADITION, ONE RING, 2500 PLUS SEATS, 150 Ft. ROUND, 193 ft. FRONT. BUY A COMPLETE SHOW FOR YOUR FAIR OR SPECIAL EVENT, OR LEASE THE TENT ALONE, WITH OR WITHOUT SEATS.

INTERNATIONAL BOOKING AGENCY FOR PARKS, FAIRS, HOTELS, SPORTS SHOWS, NIGHTCLUBS, AND CIRCUS ACTS.

#### PLEASE CONTACT:

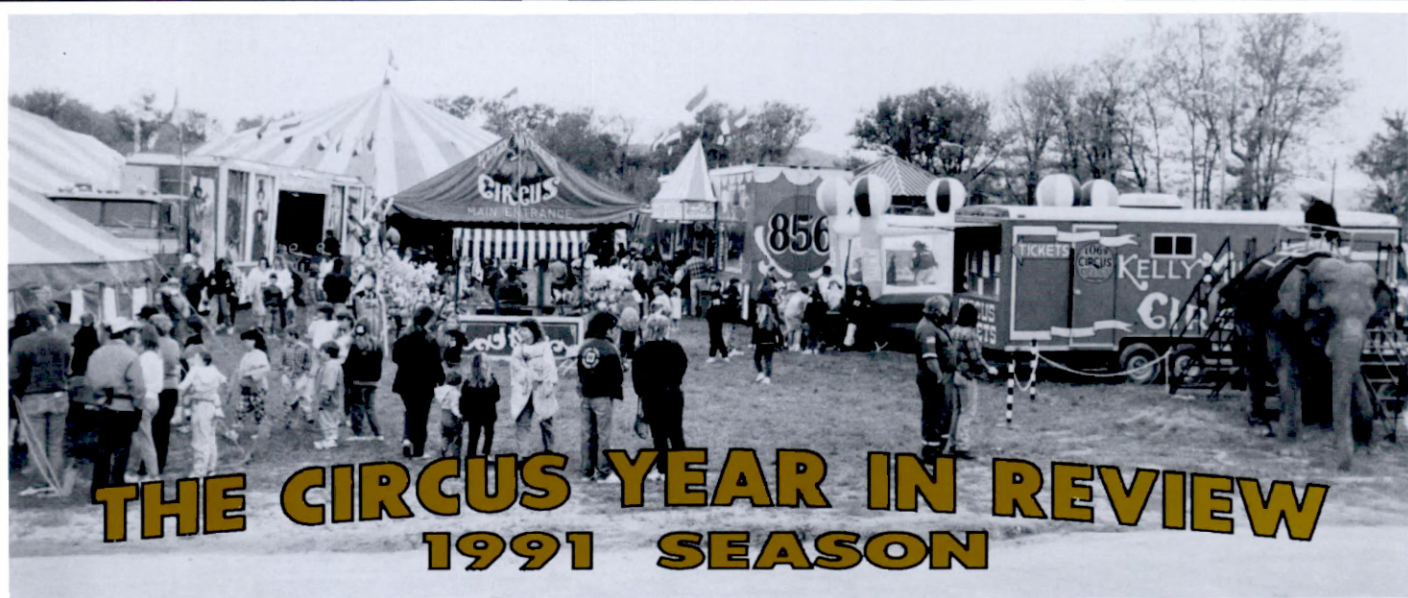
Jeanette Williams or Jackie Althoff  
OFFICE:

2011 61st Street, Sarasota, FL 34243  
Phone: (813) 351-6709--Fax (813) 351-7153

#### WINTER QUARTERS:

12611 Andrews Rd., Balm, FL 43503  
Phone: (813) 634-3911





BY FRED D. PFENING III

Nineteen-ninety-one will be remembered as the season that wasn't as bad as initially feared. Grave concerns in January and February that the Gulf War and the recession would mean death at the box office didn't materialize as the year ended up mediocre instead of terrible. In anticipation of tough times, showmen limited capital investment, cut expenses, tinkered with routing, and looked to new revenue sources. While they got a big break when the war ended quickly and decisively, and gasoline prices tumbled after a big run up in late 1990, the failure of the economy to improve effected all shows. The middling results were marked by a wide variance in profits from show to show. Some had great success; others were so-so; and a few teetered on the brink of bankruptcy. In general, circuses playing the heartland did better than those on the coasts. One telling sign of the weak economy was that elephant ride operators made change for far fewer twenty dollar bills and more for fives and tens than in past years, an indication that people simply had less money.

Protests from the animal rights movement were almost as troubling as the weak box office. The perception in the business was that the harassment increased in 1991 as virtually all circuses with animals encountered pickets. Incidents of alleged mistreatment of circus animals became front page stories by over-eager reporters who knew little about the necessities of handling wild animals. Animal welfarists pushed through legislation which banned animal exhibitions within the city limits in at least one American and one Canadian town, an

ominous trend. While many circuses published articles in their programs extolling the manner in which they cared for their animals, and Ringling-Barnum passed out a leaflet explaining its dedication to humane treatment, many owners of independent animal acts privately despaired over their future prospects of earning a living.

Other problems vexed the industry. Criticism of the use of phone promotion continued, although this issue wasn't as much in the forefront as in past years. Restrictive immigration legislation created problems in bringing foreign artists into the country. Circuses coped, rather successfully it seemed, with new regulations requiring a national driver's license.

In all, the industry held its own. It wasn't a disastrous season by any means, nor was it a bonanza. In spite of the problems, it was business as usual as circuses entertained millions of people in every state and province.

The under canvas segment of the industry, while no longer the backbone of the business, was still a highly visible and viable means of presentation. With some notable exceptions it was a small town and suburban phenomenon as urbanities generally saw their circuses indoors.

The Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus, owned by John Pugh and Doug Holwadel, opened in Deland, Florida on March 21. It soon headed north, hitting the mid-Atlantic states in May, and New

Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. newspaper ad for September 16-17 Ft. Walton Beach, Florida engagement. Leroy Sweetland collection.

Kelly-Miller midway at Carrolton, Kentucky. Bill Rhodes photo.

York and New England from Junethrough early August. After touring Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the late summer, the show turned south in early September, making a Vargasesque jump of 670 miles from Stafford, Virginia to Athens, Georgia on September 9, its longest move in years. The rest of the sea-

**America's Family Entertainment Favorite...**

**TODAY & TUESDAY**

**Clyde Beatty Cole Bros. Circus**

**ALL NEW for 1991**

**Coming To SHOWGROUNDS**

**Beal Pkwy. at Racetrack Rd. (Next to Hardee's)**

**FREE Coupons for Kids, 12 & Under at All Santa Rosa Mall Stores**

<b>TICKET PRICES:</b> GENERAL ADMISSION: Adults Age 13 & Up \$9.00 Children Age 12 & Under \$4.00 Senior Citizen \$2.00 RESERVED CHAIR SEATS \$2.00 ADULTS ONLY	<b>TICKETS NOW ON SALE AT:</b> <b>SANTA ROSA MALL INFORMATION BOOTH</b>	<b>SHOWTIMES:</b> <b>4:30 &amp; 8:00 DAILY</b>
---	--	---

**ELPHANTS** Help Save Circus and Your Tomorrow  
**3 BIG** 100-POUND  
**ELPHANTS**

**60** **PERFORMERS!** An Evening Your Child Will Never Forget!  
**THE ENTERTAINMENT VALUE OF THE SEASON! OVER 2 HOURS OF FAMILY FUN!**  
**PRESENTING AN INTERNATIONAL CAST FROM OVER 17 NATIONS**  
**THE GREATEST HERD OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS**  
ACROBATS! TRAPEZISTS! ADAGIO! JUGGLERS!  
LIONS! TIGERS! HORSES! BEARS!  
AERIAL DAREDEVILS! THE ASTROCYCLE!  
MORE CLOWNS THAN EVER BEFORE!

**Under A Canvas Arena Larger Than A Football Field!**



## FIELD TRIP • FIELDTRIP • FIELD TRIP

### WHAT A WAY TO SPEND A MORNING MORNING AND, ABSOLUTELY FREE!!

Come watch the elephants help set up the big top tent for Carson and Barnes Circus, America's largest wild animal circus and big top. Things to see include 20 elephants plus a menagerie made up of rhinoceros, hippopotamus, giraffe and big cats. Setting up the top (longer than a football field) is an event in itself so bring your cameras.

The details of this event which is both educational and entertaining are as follows:

When: March 25, 1991 from 9:30 to noon (approx. times)  
Where: Crossroads Mall  
Charge: FREE



Later in the day the circus will put on two spectacular performances at 4:30 and 8 p.m. which require tickets.

**TODAY IS THE LAST DAY  
TO BUY THESE REDUCED  
TICKETS!**

Available at Brookhires and The Greenville Kiwanis Ticket Booth at Crossroads Mall

Lyrical testimony on the romance of the tented circus. Carson and Barnes newspaper ad for March 25 date at Greenville, Texas. Deborah Haney collection.

son was spent in the deep South before packing it in on November 21.

Three dates in New York City were played, including one on the parking lot of Shea Stadium in Queens. It missed Carson and Barnes by a day in Tupelo, Mississippi in early October. Wilmington, Delaware saw the show twice, once in May and again in August. Hurricane Bob hurt business in New Jersey in August, especially the August 19 date at Cape May Court House which was cancelled. A storm blew down the tent in Panama City, Florida in late September.

Reports indicated the show had only a so-so year. The recession caused it to play more one day stands than in the past, shorten the New England trek, avoid the Philadelphia area, and head south a bit sooner than usual. The trucks put 9612 miles on their odometers with three jumps accounting for 1354 of them, about 700 more than the previous year.

New acts included Kathleen Umstead with the Josip Marcan cats, Venko Lilov with his bears, and the Rodriguez double flying trapeze act. Among the returnees were Dawnita and Gloria Bale with liberty horses, the three Dielkas sisters on rolling globes, aerialists Kristo and Nelly Ivanov, and Fred Logan with eleven elephants. Veterans Jimmy James and James Haverstrom were the ringmaster and band leader. Eight clowns provided the mirth.

The midway had a moon bounce, elephant ride, and concessions. Two clowns greeted patrons as they came on the lot, a

nice touch. The troupe moved on 27 show-owned vehicle, three straight trucks and 24 tractor-trailers. New additions included a tractor-trailer for the cat act, and an elephant trailer. To everything there is a season department: early in the year ex-Ringling-Barnum staffer Bob MacDougall was commissioned to study the feasibility of converting to rail transport.

Like the Energizer Bunny, the Carson and Barnes Circus, owned by the D. R. Miller family, just kept going and going and going. After opening in Paris, Texas on March 23, the company toured the Southwest through April. The California border was crossed on April 30, and the show remained in that state until June 7. Oregon and Washington were on the route card through early July, followed by a few days each in the Mountain and Great Plains states. Dates in the Midwest began in mid-August with the troupe going as far east as Ohio. The southwestern trek home began on September 29 in Kentucky, followed by Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Texas where the season ended on November 10.

The last of the big one night stand field shows, it played only two 2 day stands. It travelled a hair over 15,000 miles in 21 states, averaging 65 miles per jump. The longest move was 194 miles. "We decided to be conservative on the hiring and liberal on advertising," wrote Jim Judkins concerning the impact of the economy on framing the show. The route was considerably different as California was added to the itinerary, and the Mid-Atlantic states and Southeast were dropped. Reducing the nut and playing different territory appeared to pay off as all reports indicated the show came in a big winner.

Appearing under a 394 foot by 144 foot big top, the five ring performance was similar to past years with Lucianna Loyal, bareback rider; the Vital family, archery and crossbow; the Flying Padillas and Flying Ramirez; Andrea Jewel, replacing the retired Pat White, lions and tigers;

and Donnie Carr, elephants. With it and for it department: Carr had a heart attack on September 13, open heart surgery on the 23rd, and returned to the show on October 12.

It maintained its reputation as a traveling zoo with 23 elephants, a zebra, a pigmy hippo, a white rhinoceros, a giraffe, 4 camels, 3 llamas, 34 horses, ponies and donkeys, 7 wild felines, lots of lead stock, and a multitude of reptiles, a strong consist for any period of American circus history let alone one in which the exhibition of animals was often problematic. General manager Jim Judkins continued another grand tradition by editing another excellent route book.

Circus Vargas, headed by Roland Kaiser and Joe Muscarello, started in early January in Arizona, moving into California on February 4 where it remained until August 1. Dates in the Mountain and Plains states followed before the month-long invasion of the Chicago area on August 30. Moving back through the Plains states, it closed in El Paso on November 24.

The season was a difficult one. Receipts in the early going were off because of the economy and the war as the public was glued to the television each night watching events in the Middle East. Lots of rough weather also hurt business, including California floods in late February which led to the cancellation of three days.

In its last year as a three ringer, the bill incorporated, among others, Wayne Regan with lions and tigers, the Roiters on the perch pole, the Flying Rodogels and the Flying Tabares, the Alexanders' globe of death, and Rudi and Sue Lenz with their monkeys. Elephant boss Rex Williams started off with ten bulls, working

Snake show on Circus Vargas midway, Topeka, Kansas, October 7-9. Orin King photo.







Big Apple program for Lincoln Center run. Pfening Archives.

eight in the big act; after four were leased out about mid-season, the remaining four worked the spot. Dione Arata and Col. Joe, the huge Asian male, performed as a single feature.

The aggregation moved on 17 semis. The midway had a snake show, moon bounce, two pony sweeps, an elephant ride, numerous concession stands, and the ticket wagon.

The Big Apple Circus, headed by Paul Binder, was the Tiffany's of the industry. It opened its spring-summer tour earlier than usual on March 25 in Queens, playing the New York City area until mid-June. Dates in Columbus, Rochester, and New England concluded the itinerary on August 14. The winter season started near Washington on September 26, and the big stand at New York's Lincoln Center lasted from October 25 to January 5.

The spring performance was a reprise

Billboard for Cirque du Soleil in Atlanta. Richard J. Reynolds photo.



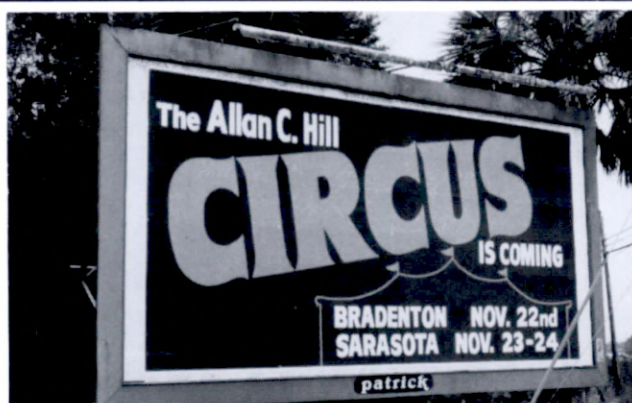
of the winter 1990 show, "Ballerinas, Horses and Clowns . . . the Golden Age." It included low wrier David Dimitri, Ben, Darlene, and Stormy Williams with the elephants Anna May and Ned, riders Susanna and Carlos Svenson, the aerial Panteleenko brothers, and the hand balancing Alexis brothers. When Grandma the clown (nee Barry Lubin) caught chicken pox during the Columbus engagement, his wife filled the role.

The theme of the new winter show was Coney Island and featured the strong performance and production values which were a hallmark of the company. Dana Kaseeva, hula hooper; Elena Panova, aerialist; the Rios brothers, Risley; Bill Woodcock and Vanessa Thomas, high energy elephant act with Peggy and Anna May; Katja Schumann, liberty and high school horses; Olivier Taquin and Olivier Bechateau, comedy automaton; and the Flying Vazquez were among the in-ring talent. Jeff Gordon as Gordoon the clown returned to the roster after a couple of years absence, and he and Grandma had a hilarious routine in which they basically spat water on one another. The other two clowns were John Lepiarz and Taso Stavarakis. As in past years, band member Linda Hudes wrote much of the score, making her as prolific a composer of original circus music as Karl King.

Cirque du Soleil again called its performance the Nouvelle Experience. Founded by Guy Laliberte, the new waver looked as much like musical theater as a field show. This was politically correct circus as the troupe carried no animals and criticized those that did, which appealed to the up scale urban sophisticates who comprised its audience for the most part.

It opened in San Diego and Costa Mesa, California in late January, then made probably the longest jump ever for a truck show to New York City where it appeared from April 11 to May 19. Appearances in Toronto, Chicago, Montreal, and Washington followed. The year ended with a November 29 to December 21 stand in Atlanta, the longest under canvas date in that city's history.

The performance included contortion, tra-



Allan Hill used his own name in advertising the Great American Circus at its Bradenton and Sarasota, Florida stands in November. Fred Pfening photo.

peze, tightrope, aerial straps, casting and foot juggling. All this occurred under a 164 foot diameter tent which sat about 2500. Many of the kinkers were trained at the company's circus school at its Montreal winter quarters, although Chinese and Russian actors were on the bill. David Shiner, an American clown, was a feature; Goeff Hoyle, a Pickle Family Circus veteran, filled in for him at least at one date.

The show reported good business throughout the season. Late in the year it announced plans to appear at the Mirage Hotel in Las Vegas starting November 22, 1992 for 40 weeks, and to embark on a three month tour of Japan in May, 1992. The latter deal was said to be a \$40 million buy out with the performance to be given under an 8000 seat Japanese big top.

The Great American Circus had a mini-tour in Florida in January and February before opening its regular season at Naples on March 1. It worked its way west into Mississippi in March before heading north to reach its traditional territory in the mid-Atlantic and New England states where it played at least through mid-October. It then moved back south, closing in Florida in late November.

The physical equipment was carried on nine show-owned vehicles, seven of which were semis. The midway had elephant, pony and camel rides, a petting zoo with goats and sheep, and a moon bounce. The animal inventory included two camels, eight ponies, two horses, and five elephants, one of whom worked in the publicity department in advance of the show.

The one ring exhibition took place beneath an 80 foot round top tent with one 40 foot and two 30 foot middle sections. Talent was provided by Brian La Palme who ringmastered and ate fire, Milton Zamudio on the trapeze, Eddie Steeple's



chimps and bears, Tim Frisco with the elephants, Louise Rosell with her leopards, Jorge Rosell in his comedy car, and Roman Espana's hand and finger balancing.

Owner Allan C. Hill was grand marshal of the 1991 Sarasota Circus Festival parade in January, and appeared on television's *To Tell the Truth* program in May. Late in the year, Hill diversified his interests by promoting boxing, wrestling and music in the Sarasota area.

Kelly-Miller opened in its home town of Hugo, Oklahoma on March 16, and played Texas and the South before reaching the Midwest in early May. On July 16, it crossed into Ontario, appearing in that province until late August. Southern and Plains states stands followed before the closing in Oklahoma on October 27. The

mas, two pigmy goats, a pot bellied pig, snakes, albino skunks, a cage of rabbits and an alligator.

The single ring performance featured Christina Dubsy with her poodles and doves, Wolfgang Bruno with a single, and later a triple, elephant act, Harry and Amy Muller in a gorilla parody, Tavanna Luvas in a loop walk, and the Kiss family with their first rate hand balancing presentation. Marshall Eckelman led a three piece band, and Bill Rawls was the ringmaster.



Roberts Bros. Circus cook house. Paul C. Gutheil photo.



New state of the art Kelly-Miller concession semi built by Jim Roller. Dave Reddy photo.

show traveled about 13,000 miles, and by all accounts had a good year financially.

The midway had a new concession trailer, a ticket trailer, elephant ride, pony ride, moon bounce, novelty stand, and a side show, the latter the only one on a touring aggregation. It had a blade box, magic, fire eater, and a menagerie composed of a tiger, three camels, two lla-

mas, two pigmy goats, a pot bellied pig, snakes, albino skunks, a cage of rabbits and an alligator. Veteran Jim Roller took over as manager as co-owner and former road manager David Rawls devoted his energies to the advance. The show had its usual three day June booking in Ann Arbor where the Sig Sautelle bandwagon from the International Circus Hall of Fame was part of the special parade.

Franzen Bros. Circus started off in Florida in late March. After the obligatory southern tour, it reached the Mid-Atlantic states by at least early May. After early summer dates in New York it meandered through the Midwest where the route was lost after a late September stand in Indiana.

The midway was the usual: a moon bounce, pony and elephant ride, concession trailer, ticket trailer, clown face painting booth, and a petting zoo. Owner Wayne Franzen worked the cat act, two African elephants, and occasionally the liberty horses. Other acts were juggling by Casey Caiman, and magic by Paul Lee who was also the announcer.

Franzen also booked Eric Jaeger's Circus Jaeger into Eagle Pass Park in northern Wisconsin from June 24 to September 2 according to the advertising, but in reality for only four days. Instead the show went on a series of fair dates. The star of the 90

minute performance was Alexandre Slaugetnis, a Latvian clown who was part of the National Circus Project and on Jaeger in 1990. Geoffrey Hansen also performed as a magician in this one ring tent.

Roberts Bros. Circus opened in Apollo Beach, Florida on March 18, and followed the typical route of a Florida based show by appearing through the South in the spring. It reached the Mid-Atlantic states by at least May 4. After spending the summer in that area and New England, it



Culpepper and Merriweather concession and ticket semi at Morengo Valley, California, April 20. Jerry Cash photo.

heading back home sometime in September with an October 13 engagement in Florida being the last record available.

Owned by the family of the late Robert Earl, the performance included Yvonne Stephens, dogs; Eddie Murillo, sword balancing; Bill Schrieber, trained rabbits and ponies; and numerous acts by the Earl family. Frank Felt was the ringmaster and matriarch Doris Earl had the cook house.

The Culpepper and Merriweather Circus started in Phoenix on February 21, playing Arizona through the end of April. After a month in California, it appeared in Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, and Iowa before arriving in Illinois in late June. After a series of dates in Chicago, the show continued in the Midwest before turning





south and west to close in Arizona on October 19 after putting over 11,000 miles on the odometers in fourteen states.

The one ring performance was under an 80 foot round top with one 30 foot middle section. The entire company of about 35 moved on seven trucks, five of them semis, and nine motor homes. New equipment included a concession truck purchased from Kelly-Miller. Among the animals were a camel, a donkey, a llama, eleven ponies, two horses, three goats, a pig and an African elephant named Barbara.

Some of the acts were: Brent DeWitt, clown; Heidi Wendany, dogs and Excalibur, a dressage horse; Ken "Turtle" Benson with the elephant; Terrell Jacobs, dog and pony drill and whip act with wife Lynn; Chris Kennington and Ron Pace, perch and cradle acts; and Ken Taylor, trapeze. Owner Robert "Red" Johnson was the ringmaster. Kennington and Pace joined the exalted ranks of route book editors when they published one on the show.

Bentley Bros. Circus, owned by Tommy Bentley and Chuck Clancey, had stands in Florida from January to March. The western run began in Arizona on April 16 and closed in California on May 28. The third series, all in the East and Midwest, began in late July, and ended in Cincinnati in early September.

After years of blue-skying it in fairgrounds and ball parks, the show bought a big top from George and Vicki Hanneford. One under canvas date was at Pinnellas Park, Florida in late February where the two hour, single ring show featured Bob Steele's bears, George Allen's aerial number, the Caceres on the high

Reid Bros. Circus big top. Bobby Gibbs photo.



wire, and Dianne Moyer's liberty horses, dogs, mixed animal act, and elephant. Jerry Eye-stone was ringmaster.

On the roster at the grandstand performance in Cincinnati were Kay Rosaire with her cats, Jim and Tapa Hall with their bears, Bela Tabak with his trained peacocks, a Dave Smith cannon, plus a number of the actors from the earlier tours. The Bentley organization also framed a Christmas show.

Vidbel's Olde Tyme Circus, headed by Al and Joyce Vidbel, hit nine states in the Mid-Atlantic and New England area from May 2 to September 21. It moved on two semis and three trucks pulling trailers ex-



Vidbel's Old Tyme Circus at Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, September 6. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

and Mountain states before stopping in St. Paul on July 17. The fall trek went from September 18 to October 18, all in Texas.

Working under the canvas pavilion were Chris Kilpatrick and his cats, the Flying Starlings, Robert and Nicholas Zerbini in a comedy knockabout routine, and Freddie and Alfredo Silva on the high wire. Bobby Gibbs worked the Don Johnson elephants and was the ringmaster on both tours, the latter of

Allen Bros. Circus midway at West Liberty, Kentucky. Bill Rhodes photo.

cept when the troupe was ferried to Martha's Vineyard for a three day stand. The midway had a moon bounce, pony and elephant rides, a novelty stand, a concession stand, and a snake show.

The big top was an 80 foot round with a 40 foot middle section which sat about 1000. Under it appeared the Suarez-Loyal riders, one of the best in the business; Sharon Vidbel's huskies; Kinte's baboons; and Bucky Steele's elephants. Billy Martin was the announcer.

Reid Bros. Circus, owned by John and Betty Reid, had two tours. The spring season opened in Brookings, Oregon on April 18, and played the Plains

which must have been like hearing Caruso sing.

John "Gopher" Davenport's King Royal Circus spilled little ink in the trade press, and as a consequence only a handful of confirmed dates were recorded—in Texas in March, April, and October, and in Nebraska in June. During the summer he had two companies on tour, one in Alaska and the other in the Yukon. The Canadian unit was managed by his sons as an offshoot of the main troupe. Davenport kept a tent and seats in storage in Alaska to save transportation costs for his annual Arctic excursion.

The stateside show used an 80 foot round top with three 30 foot middles which sat about 800. The midway had the ticket wagon, a moon bounce, a pony ride, and a series of ding shows operated by Shorty and Beulah Shears. Gopher Davenport with the the cat act, Gigi Davenport on the trapeze, and Julio Castillo and Afilla Mecias on the tight wire were part of the bill.

Allen Bros. opened in Texas in mid-March, apparently spending much of the



spring in the South. For much of the summer it sojourned in the Border states, the Midwest and the Great Plains. The show was in Texas by at least early October, closing there on November 7.

This one's midway had the ubiquitous moon bounce, a petting zoo, a pony ride and a concession trailer. The big top sat about 800 around the single ring. Owner Allen Bedford and his wife Erlynn each worked the cat act at various times during the season; she presented the elephant. Other talent included Kathy and Oscar Garcia, juggling; Kathy English, dogs; and George Rowe as Kalamazoo the magician. Rowe was also the announcer. The music was taped, which was the norm on smaller shows.

Armando Farfan's show, called the Dream Clown, was a high tech, new wave production with a story line. It debuted in Tokyo in late December and remained in Japan through the spring. The company did great business in the Far East, but faltered stateside. It reopened under canvas in San Diego starting June 28 for two weeks. It then moved to San Bernardino, after which it went dark for a week. The show apparently struggled through California with many days off until at least mid-November.

At the San Diego opening the performers included the Flying Farfans, the Gerrerros on the high wire, the Constantines on the teeterboard, Armando Farfan Jr. and Willy Pages on the wheel of death, Kip Reynolds as the dream clown, clowns Tim and Gi Gi Tegge, and Kay Rosaire with her cats. The Tegges and Rosaire left early in the tour, the latter being replaced by Andre Skarbecki.

Plunkett Bros. Circus had a few under canvas engagements in Texas in March, May, June, and October, and possibly other months. The Plunkett family put on much of the show at the season opener in Royce City. Cleo Plunkett was ring-

Audience lining up to enter Circus Flora big top at Charleston, South Carolina in May. Tom Parkinson photo.



master, Wendy Plunkett worked Roman rings, Christopher James Plunkett did low wire, and most of the family jumped on the trampoline. Other acts were Christine Herriott on single trapeze, and Helen Carpenter with mixed cats.

Phills Bros. Circus, owned by Bill Phillips, was in Pennsylvania and New Jersey from June to August, moving on two straight trucks pulling trailers. The tent was a 60 foot round top with a 30 foot middle section which sat between 600 and 700. Among the performers were clowns

Skin and Bones with their pot bellied pigs, Carl and Patty Reed with their dogs, the Zachery gauchos, and Brett Bronson with his two elephants. Bobby Fairchild was the announcer and, like many others in his line of work, also did magic.

David Mobbs' had his Circus USA in Miami and Hialeah, Florida in October under a rented Harold Barnes tent, a 110 foot top round with three 45 foot middles. Acts included Bob Steele's bears, the Flying Lunas, the Urias globe of death, the Osorio brothers on high wire, and Luis Montalvo on slack wire. The latter was a Cuban defector who went over big with the anti-Castro Hispanic community. Billy Martin was the ringmaster and Charles Schlarbaum led the band.

Circus Flora, David Balding's contribution to the sawdust world, called its production "Back to the Bayou: the Pirate." Flora was unique in having its theme--the adventures of the fictional 19th century Baldini circus family--run not only throughout the performance, but from season to season. This year's installment highlighted the Baldinis problems with pirates in the Louisiana bayou. Part Broadway, part Sarasota, the big top performance went back and forth between the story's plot and traditional circus routines. Among the talent in this one ringer



Clown David Larible, the star of the Ringling-Barnum red unit, poses with ringmaster Eric Michael Gillett and Anna Louise McCarthy, daughter of long-time Ringling-Barnum treasurer Charles Hutchinson, at the retired actors' home when the show was in the Los Angeles area. Anna Louise McCarthy photo.

were high wirer Tino Wallenda-Zoppe, the Flying Redpaths, cloud swinger Sacha Pavlata, clown Larry Pisoni, and the elephants Flora and McClain. The circus made its annual appearance at Charleston's Spoleto Festival in late May, and may have later played its home town of St. Louis where it operated a circus school. Spring dates in Camden, South Carolina and St. Louis were cancelled.

Le Cirque Archaos stretched the boundaries of circus further than anything ever seen in North America. It called itself a "post apocalyptic" circus, and the ring's backdrop was a junk yard of flickering TV's, wrecked cars and broken toilets. The performance combined high wire, acrobatics and other circus turns with simulated shootings, burials, decapitations and rapes. Its publicity called it "The Last Show on Earth," and boomed the number

The Ringling-Barnum red unit train, always a thrill. Ed Jones photo.







Back yard of Ringling-Barnum blue unit at Lexington, Kentucky in March. Bill Rhodes photo.

of injuries the cast incurred. It was as if Charles Manson were the artistic director of Cirque du Soleil. Acts symbolized events such as the fall of Rome and the industrial revolution; indeed, the show's theme was no less than the history of the world "from the beginning to the end." One imagines they only hit the highlights.

This bizarre troupe was headed by Pierrot Bidon, a Frenchman who founded the company a few years ago. It played Toronto from September 17-29 under the same rented tent the Moscow Circus had used there in 1989. A New York engagement was cancelled at the last minute. The show had an incredible route, opening in France in April, then appearing in Germany, Israel, and England before landing in Canada.

The indoor branch of the business employed more people than any other, and covered the widest range of population centers—from the great metropolitan centers which saw Ringling-Barnum and the Moscow Circus, to the big cities which saw Shrine circuses, to the smallest cross-roads village which viewed the many school shows. Doubtless more people saw circuses indoors than out.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey's 121st edition, the Red unit, started on December 27, 1990 in Venice, Florida. Working its way northward, the show reached the promised land, the greater New York area, on March 12 when it opened at the Meadowlands. A week at the Nassau Coliseum, and five at Madison Square Garden followed. Other eastern engagements preceded a 1428 mile jump from Philadelphia to Tulsa in early June which was followed by a 1545 mile jaunt to Tucson. The company remained in the West and Mountain states through mid-October. The season wound down in the Midwest, ending on December 1 in Chicago.

David Larible, an Italian clown, was the headliner. He appeared many times on the bill, and by all accounts rocked 'em. He was Ringling-Barnum's first clown feature since Emmett Kelly back in the under-canvas days. Other acts included the Fujian acrobatic troupe from China, Lisa Dufresne's liberty cows, pigs, goats and ducks, Russian juggler Gregory Popovich, the Flying Vargas and the Flying Espanas, Vivien Larible on the trapeze, the Bucky Boger family with their bison, Marco Peters with James Clubb's tigers and lions, Jon Weiss and Philip Peters in a doubled barrelled cannon, and Dinky Patterson on the trapeze. Patterson broke her wrist and heel in a fall in New York, and was replaced by Jackie Marsolais who stayed through September when she was replaced by Wendy Plunkett Bell.

Although this was the beginning of the post-Gunther Gebel-Williams era on the Big Show, he was still much in evidence helping his son Mark Oliver with the mixed liberty act, an equine liberty act, and the elephant routine. The younger Gebel didn't work his father's cat act. Those charges lived in retirement, happily no doubt, in the Venice winter quarters. The senior Gebel-Williams published his autobiography, and spent some time off the show promoting the book.

The Red unit moved on 47 railroad cars, 27 sleepers, 2 storage cars, 13 flats, 4 stocks and 1 bi-level car. The animal roster included 21 elephants, 32 liberty horses, eleven tigers, five lions, four zebras, four camels, four ponies, three bison, two llamas, a steer, and assorted pigs, cows, goats and ducks. Observers noted that the specs were not as elaborate or lavish as in past years. A major investment was made, however, in a new computerized lighting system.

The Blue unit opened its second tour on December 27, 1990 in Miami. Some of the bigger cities on the route were Washington, D. C., San Antonio, Ft. Worth, Dallas, Houston, New Orleans, Detroit, Pitts-

burgh, Boston, Cleveland and Buffalo where the season ended on November 17.

This unit starred Flavio Togni with his excellent liberty horses and elephants, a leopard riding a rhino, and big elephant routine. He and his family returned to Europe after the tour concluded, leaving as a legacy the memory of some of the finest animal acts seen in decades.

Among the other performers were Luis Palacios with a Clubb mixed cage act, the Quiros on the high wire, the hand balancing Pellegrini brothers, the Winns' aerial motorcycle and sway poles, the Flying Guttys and the Flying Morales, Johnny Peers with his dogs, and Jimmy Silverlake with King Tusk.

Elephant rides were operated at a few dates, the first on either unit since the late 1970s. Alex Gautier ran them on most dates, although Buckles Woodcock filled in at Washington after Gautier was injured.

In other Ringling-Barnum news, owner Kenneth Feld promoted a touring American Gladiator show based on the popular television program. The first date was in Augusta, Maine on October 9; it moved on two trucks and two buses. The organization also operated ice shows, and the Siegfried and Roy magic revue packed the showroom at Las Vegas' Mirage Hotel. Clown college alumni held a reunion on the red unit in Los Angeles in

Newspaper ad for the Moscow Circus at the Gershwin Theatre on Broadway in November. Pfening Archives.

STEVEN E. LEBER AND SOVIETCIRCUS PRESENT

**MOSCOW CIRCUS**

**MOSCOW CIRCUS CIRK VALENTIN**

*It's Not Just Clowning Around...  
...It's A Real Broadway Production!*

**OPENS NOVEMBER 5th!**

**CALL  (212) 307-4100**  
or visit all Ticketmaster locations  
Box Office open daily (except Sunday) at 10:00am  
Group Sales (20 or more): (212) 398-8383

**Gershwin Theatre**

Save \$5 with coupon from:  
Gristedes, Red Apple & 

Official NY Host: 

Best Way to the Gershwin: 

222 West 51st Street (50th & 51st)  New York City Transit Authority





Marquee of Royal Hanneford Circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade. Tom Parkinson photo.

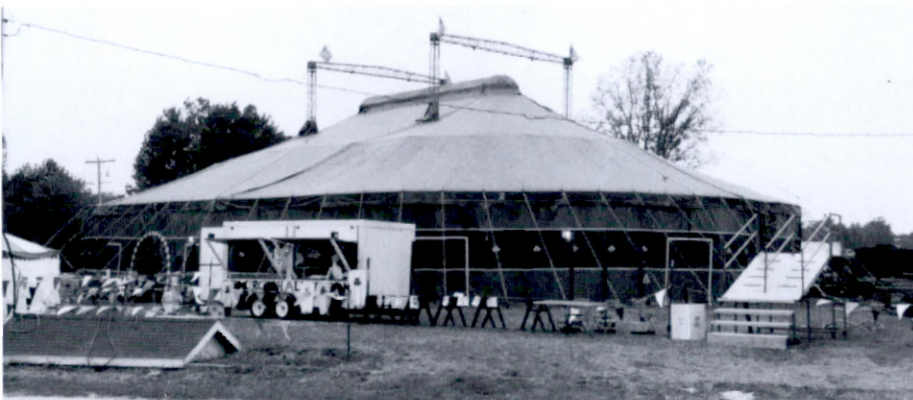
August. The Circus Camp held its first sessions in Smithfield, Maine during the summer. The Ringling-Barnum circus stores continued to operate, although the product mix was revamped.

The Moscow Circus was another big-time, big city indoor show. The tour that began in mid-1990 at Atlantic City opened the new year in Dayton, and played Chicago, Los Angeles, San Diego, Denver, St. Louis, and Boston, among other towns, before closing in Toronto in May.

The acts were standard Russian fare which meant bears, teeterboard, Cossack riding, wire walking--and the Cranes, the extraordinary flying trapeze act the likes of which probably will not be seen on these shores anytime soon.

Cirk Valentin, a new production, was to have opened in Boston on October 1, then played Providence, before moving to New York City. Only the Gotham date took place as the other two stands were cancelled. It opened, ringless, on the stage of the Gershwin Theater on Broadway on November 5 and closed a month later. The company was named named Val-

Joe Bauer's Hall of Fame Circus on grounds of old American Circus Corporation winter quarters, now the site of the International Circus Hall of Fame, at Peru, Indiana, September 22. Tim Tegge photo.



entin Gneushev, originator of the Flying Cranes and artistic director of the troupe. His aerial masterpiece this time was called the Chimes who simulated the hands and pendulum of an enormous clock high above the ground. Other acts included Yuri Borzykin who juggled on a rolling globe, and a routine called Rattango in which a live rat performed. A holdover from the earlier tour was clown Alexander Frish.

It seemed that the novelty of Russian circuses was wearing off as it appeared that grosses were down, and neither unit garnered the publicity of past years. The cancellation of two of the Cirk Valentin dates were symptomatic of the company's problems. Producer Steven Leber also had a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle show in arenas. While this era of Moscow circus may have come to an end, many of its acts, particularly the Cranes, made a lasting impression on American audiences by stretching the limits of the impossible.

Circuses sponsored by Shrine temples and other fraternal and charitable organizations, notably police and fire fighter groups, were an important part of the business. The generic title "Shrine Circus" hindered most showmen from developing name recognition in the public mind, and created the unfortunate situation where many producers competed on

price rather than merit in negotiating contracts. Nevertheless, many of these circuses were of high quality, featuring acts formerly on Ringling-Barnum, Big Apple, and major European shows. Many, if not most, performers preferred Shrine dates because they were generally less arduous and offered better working and living conditions than in the tented version of the industry.

There was the annual mad scramble for dates as local temples shortened their runs and continued to beat on producers to lower their price. When asked about the Shrine Circus business, one veteran producer sarcastically responded: "The temples have us just about where they want us." It appeared more than the usual reshuffling of bookings occurred. George Carden, Tommy Hanneford and George Coronas seemed to have been on the upswing while others such as Tarzan Zerbini and Grace McIntosh lost dates.

Tommy and Struppi Hanneford's Royal



Professor Bob Atterbury's fabulous loop-the-loop car was a show grounds feature at the Great Circus Parade. Tom Parkinson photo.

Hanneford Circus was a major player in the world of Shrinedom with big contracts at Flint, Columbus, New Orleans, Houston, and Indianapolis. The show played a number of other sponsored dates, and at least one sponsorless engagement in Chicago. It booked shows and acts into amusement parks, and appeared at fairs, including the big Eastern States Exposition and the Minnesota State Fair. It was also the circus at Milwaukee's Great Circus Parade for the fourth consecutive year. Hanneford had two, and sometimes three, units out simultaneously, and had engagements from early January until December 1.

Among the acts on the Red unit at the January Flint opening were the Flying Montoyas; David Rosaire with his dogs; the Mayas, living statues; Bruno Blaszak



with his tigers; and Mark Karoly with his well known comedy riding, and elephant routines. The two production numbers had a side show, and a winter theme. Charlie Hackett was the ringmistress, and Kay Parker led the band.

Performers on the Green show in Dayton in April included Patricia Zerbini with her tigers, the Flying Redpaths, the Zerbini and Mike Torres elephants, Bob Moore's dogs, and the Welde bears. The "Hello Nellie" spec, recounting the career of Nellie Hanneford, was as campy a production number as seen in years. Its highlight occurred when she was presented with a giant replica of a movie Oscar by ringmaster Senor Rai.

Hanneford changed the bill a bit each day at the Great Circus Parade, rotating talent such as Davide Zoppe with his monkeys, Dana and D. V. Allen with the Diane Wilson seals, the Ibarra family, and juggler Justino Zoppe. He also had a thrill show which included Professor Robert Atterbury's fabulous loop the loop car.

The George Carden Circus International, called Circus Vegas at some dates, was another big time operation, having as many as three units on tour, one managed by George Carden, another by his father Larry Carden, and the third by Dino Medeiros. The organization played a number of Shrine and other sponsored dates, and fairs, including the West Virginia State Fair. While it had a number of bookings in the Midwest, and even some in the East, much of its circus was in the West and Canada, including a long run of satellite dates for the Vancouver Shrine.

When the Medeiros unit played Eugene, Oregon for the Shrine in March, the arenic attractions included Trudy Strong with the Cuneo tiger act, the Nocks on sway poles, Jacqueline Zerbini on single trapeze, Ricardo Perez in a globe act, the Flying Caceres, and Ramon Esqueda with a pony drill. Ree Schweitzer ringmistressed.

The Dick Anderson liberty horses, Smiley Daley, Jr. with his comedy car and comedy bike, Lisa Hartzell on Roman rings, the Flying Poemas, and Joe Frisco with three show-owned elephants were among the actors on another unit which played Springfield, Illinois as Circus Vegas on February 25-26.

The Tarzan Zerbini Circus's two units, the Blue and the Gold, produced a number of major Shrine circuses. The Gold unit traipsed around Canada from the Maritimes to the Pacific for five months.

This one's flagship stand was the venerable Detroit Shrine Circus, the continent's oldest temple date. Acts appearing at the March extravaganza included co-owner Tarzan Zerbini working the tigers, Tahar with his alligators,

Freddie Nock on the high wire and on a sway pole, Sylvia Zerbini with liberty horses, the Tangier troupe in an Arab act, the Flying Vazquez, and Henry Munoz, Captain USA himself, the human cannon ball. Joe Bauer Jr. was ringmaster.

From August 24 to September 22, co-owner Joe Bauer, Sr. produced the Hall of Fame Circus in nine Indiana cities for Peru's International Circus Hall of Fame. On this one ring tent the acts included Patricia Zerbini with the cats, Gene and Eleanor Mendez on the high wire, jugglers Pat and Lauren Davison, Jim Arneberg's dogs, and Bill Morris's elephants. Riders Susanna and Carlos Svenson made some of the early towns on the route. Rich Rosio led the band and John Fugate was the ringmaster.

The George Coronas Circus had a number of big Shrine dates including Chicago, St. Louis, Fort Worth, and Kansas City. At Chicago in March the acts included Kris Kilpatrick with his cats, Susan Sheryll's Afghans, Ernestina Zamperla with a dressage horse, the Flying Fornasaris, the King Charles comedy unicycle troupe, Scott Taylor with his snakes, and the Coronas African elephants. Phil McDonald was the ringmaster, and Rick Percy led a band of about 15 pieces.

The show worked for the Atlanta Shrine in April under a tent rented from Harold Barnes, a 150 foot round top with four 50 foot middles. The Starlords, aerial motorcyclists, were added for this date. Lucky Larabee was the ringmaster. At St. Louis in June the company appeared in seven rings in Busch Stadium. It featured twenty-four aerial acts, closing with the Bock helicopter trapeze. Coronas had a circus at a Memphis park during the summer.

The Jordan International Circus began marching in Salt Lake City on February 1 and appeared west of the Mississippi through July when it laid off for three weeks. Dates in the Big Sky states, the far west, and Canada followed before closing at Palm Springs, California on November 10. At the Phoenix Shrine in April the actors included the aeri-



Trudy Strong works the John Cuneo tigers at a Hamid-Morton date in Lindenhurst, New York in June. Paul C. Gu-theil photo.

al Polos, hula hoopist Lynn Polke, the teeterboarding Adrian family, the Flying Poemas, the Zoppe riders featuring Carla Emerson, David Polke with the Cuneo elephants, and the Jordan globe of death. Tammy Wallenda worked the old Dave Hoover lion and tiger act. David Maas was ringmaster and performed magic, and Mike Simpson directed the musicians.

Like most shows playing sponsored dates, the personnel changed over the season as performers left to fulfil other contracts. Ringmaster Austin Miles eventually joined, as did Kris Kilpatrick with his cats. High wirer Jorge Castro was seriously injured when he dropped forty feet during his act at Logan, Utah on February 8, and Ester Luna broke both wrists when she fell during her Roman ring routine in Emporia, Kansas on April 9. The fall run was tough for owner Johnny Jordan as the San Francisco sponsor backed out at the last minute, and the company played the city cold to thin crowds.

George Coronas Circus at April's Yaa-rab Temple Shrine Circus in Marietta, Georgia. Five pole big top was rented from Harold Barnes. Joe Bradbury photo.





George Hubler's International Super Circus had a number of dates from January to October. Jorge Barreda's cats, Lou Ann Jacobs' elephants, Sharon Vidbel's huskies, the Dielkas sisters on rolling globes, Arthur Duchek on the high wire, and the Flying Rodriguez were some of the artists at January's Albany Shrine booking. Veteran Bill Browning was bandmaster, and Hubler was the announcer. In Peoria in June the acts included the Cuneo and Zerbini elephants, Patti Zerbini's tigers, Fossett's chimps,

NUTA WADENBAUM PRESENTS A PESACH FAMILY

STARRING THE GREAT WALLENDA FAMILY

ALL PERFORMERS WILL ADHERE TO THE LAWS OF ISRAEL

ALL PERFORMERS IN THE SHOW ARE MALE

**COMPLETE EXTRAVAGANZA**  
WILL TAKE PLACE INDOORS

**RAIN OR SHINE!**

**BRAND NEW SOUND FACILITIES**

**NEW JEWISH EXPO!**

**Featuring:**

- LIPKIN
- TAPDIT
- HIGH RHYME ACTS
- THE 6-12-10
- COULET FAMILY
- SINGERS
- THE SATER
- WILD ANIMALS
- PERFORMING ELEPHANTS
- COMET
- THE THUNDERBOLT HYPERSTRETCH ACT
- TIGERS
- TIGERS

**A Starry Animal Zoo**

- ELEPHANTS
- HOLLANDS
- TIGERS
- ZEBRAS
- MONKEYS ETC.

**Carnival**

FAIR GAMES

BOOZE BOLE

ALL AGES

**Petting Zoo**

**Special Exhibit**

THE GREAT

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**Hoodwalk**

**Animal Ride**

- ELEPHANTS
- CAMELS
- PINEES

**Farmyard Animals**

**FLOYD BENNETT FIELD**

GATEWAY NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

LEWISTON AND BETHUNE BOULEVARD PLAZA • HANNAH PARKWAY

**CHOL HAA MOED PESACH**

**MONDAY, TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY**

**APRIL 1, 2, & 3 - 10:30-7:30**

**SHOWTIMES: 12:00-2:30-5:00**

**CONCERTS: 11:00-1:30-4:00**

**WOLF GROUPS AVAILABLE**

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

**NEW! FOUNTAINS**

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

**TICKETS:**

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

100-250-0000 (700-00-00)

**LEWISTON PARK**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**MEET THE**

**Food**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**100-250-0000 (700-00-00)**

**MEET THE**

**Food**

Circus Valentine had summer and fall runs in Texas, using the equipment from

Grace Mc Intosh's M & M Circus had Shrine dates at Sioux City, Iowa and Omaha, Nebraska in early April. The acts included Kris Kilpatrick with his cats, the Plunkett family on trampoline, the Flying Garcias, cloud swinger Billy Barton, the



Lancelot Link chimps, Bobby and Rosa Gibbs with the three Don Johnson elephants, and Wendy and Corky Plunkett's two bulls. Don Bridwell was producing clown.

Don Johnson's Clyde Bros. Circus Shined in Grand Forks, North Dakota; Los Cruces, New Mexico, and for fourteen days in Iowa. It also had an odd-ball booking for a church camp near Dallas in late July. Actors at the latter stand included Doug Teranova with the cats and the elephants, Fay Alexander's comedy car, and Victoria Flores on Roman rings. Cathy Rogers was ringmistress.

Circus Pages was a new entry. Owned by William and George Pages, it worked both indoors and outdoors for the Eagles in Florida in February and March, and appeared in the Canadian and American West during the summer. In October and November it was in Kansas, Nebraska, and Arkansas. Reports of a Texas tour were unconfirmed. One semi-trailer carried the equipment, and a truck and trailer unit moved the concessions for the three ring, grandstand company. At the February 2 Sarasota opening the acts included Frieda Logan Pages in a slide for life, Lancelot Ramos with a mixed cat act and elephant presentation, Roberto Torres on the slack wire, the Flying Pages, and George and Felix Pages in a space wheel. Jorge del Moral was ringmaster, and Bill Pruyn was bandmaster. Col. Ed Smith was the general agent.

Paul Kaye had only one date, but it was a beauty, the big Evansville, Indiana Shrine from November 28-December 1. As Billy Barton sagely noted in *Circus Report*, this stand was a throw-back to the glory days of Shrine circuses when a high quality, crowd pleasing show was more important to the local temple than getting the lowest possible price from the pro-



The Liebel Family Circus played a number of small fairs throughout the year. Tommi Liebel photo.

ducer. Among the acts were Trudy Strong with the Cuneo tigers, fourteen Cuneo elephants, the Flying Rodriguez, the Lancelot Link chimps, Billy Barton in his Mr. Sensation cloud swing routine, the Smaha family with their horses, Venko Lilov's with his bears, the Diane Wilson's seals, the Plunkett family on the trampoline, Christopher James Plunkett on the low wire, Gerard Soules with his poodles, and the Carrillo brothers on the high wire. Phil McDonald was the ringmaster and Jack Cervone had the band.

Circuses were part of the fair and festival scene, often as free attractions booked by carnivals or by the fairs themselves. With a few exceptions these were small troupes, usually one ringers giving about an hour long presentation. They were both under canvas or in front of a grandstand. While many indoor pro-

The beautiful Williams-Althoff Circus at Tampa in October. Jeanette Williams photo.

ducers played fairs during the slack summer Shrine season, a few other companies specialized in this brand of show business.

The German National Circus Williams-Althoff was a new company in this market. A beautifully framed show, it used a 150 foot round Canobbio tent. Owned by Jacki Althoff and Jeanette Williams, this one had its maiden engagement in the parking lot of Tampa Stadium as part of a festival in mid-October. Among the acts were Jacki Althoff with

his bears, clowns Dusty Sadler and Junkyard Johnny Meah, the Galambos acrobats, Caroline Williams with liberty horses, Joanne Wilson with Susie the elephant, Valerie Wallenda on the trapeze, and the Mark Karoly riders. Kim Karoly was injured when she fell from a horse during a performance. David Locke was ringmaster.

The Olympic International Circus produced the circus at the Florida State Fair in Tampa in February. Among those working under the canvas at this one were Ron and Joy Holiday with their Cat Dancers routine, the Flying Cortez, the Garcia duo with their aerial cradle, and the Ramos riding act. Owner Hugo Zacchini also had a few indoor dates including the Nashville and Terre Haute Shrines. The Flying Wallendas worked some of those stands. Zacchini, in spite of more retirements than Buffalo Bill, did a few shoots from his cannon as a single attraction at fairs.

The Liebel Family Circus played small fairs in the South, East and Midwest from March until at least October. At the Kissimmee, Florida opener on March 9 owner Tommi Liebel clowned, presented the pony drill, the elephant act, and had a mind reading pony routine; Linda von Uhl had a high school horse; Tony Liebel did his fine rola bola act; and Baron Julies von Uhl worked his lions. Bill Birchfield was the announcer, and a two piece band was used in the 100 foot round top tent which sat about 500. There was some turnover in personnel during the season; for example, Valerie Wallenda did her aerial routine and a cradle act with Jean Paul Arnsi for part of the tour.

Peggy Klein Kaltenbach's Circus Continental was the grandstand attraction at a number of Midwestern fairs during the summer. At one point in August she had overlapping bookings, one in Lucasville, Ohio and the other in Cobelskil, New York. The Cobelskil show was a strong one for the genre, including Tammy Wallenda with her cats, the Diane Wilson





seals, hand balancer Yuri Krasnov, the Flying Valentines, and Brett Bronson's elephants. Charles Van Buskirk was the announcer, and Bill Browning had the band. On the Ohio and Michigan engagements Rick Legg was ringmaster, Irvin Hall performed his comedy unicycle and presented his baboons, the Guerraros were on the high wire and had their globe of death, Gerard Soules had his poodles, and Bobby and Rosa Gibbs worked the elephants.

George Moffett's International Fair Time Circus had bookings at small fairs in Missouri, Ohio, Illinois and Pennsylvania. The Ibarra with their flying trapeze and wheel of death, Irvin Hall with his unicycle and baboons, and Tammy Wallenda with her cats were among the talent at a Bloomington, Illinois fair in late July. Co-producer George Hubler was the announcer.

Happytime Circus worked California fairs and festivals throughout the year. The under canvas display included Maureen Hall's macaw act and dog routine, Ed Russell's magic, Stephen Michael's juggling, and owner Dave Twomey with dogs and a llama. This one ringer, in its 26th season, used taped music.

The Herriott Family Circus played the Virginia State Fair in the fall. The tented presentation included Bob and Mariah Skinner as Skin and Bones who juggled, presented pot bellied pits, and did a musical clown routine; and Scott Ertl who performed magic. Various members of the Herriott family also appeared in the ring. Co-owners John and Mary Ruth Herriott spent much of the year managing the Land of Little Horses park in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Swan Bros. Circus had a run of California fairs and festivals from May to October. Michael and Andy Swan as clowns Zippy and Hi Tops put on the entire performance which included magic, juggling, a wire act, and a trained dog routine. Circus Sahara appeared at New York and Pennsylvania fairs. Among the talent were foot juggler Vickie Howle, the unicycling and Risleying Bruskis, jugglers and rola bolaers Pat and Lauren Davison, the DuBois duo in an aerial cradle, and owner Dorian Blake with magic. Carla Wallenda had her little thrill circus on a string of fairs in the Midwest and South, often working for the Silver Dollar Shows Carnival.

Jaime Garcia had Circo de Espectacular at a New York fair during the summer

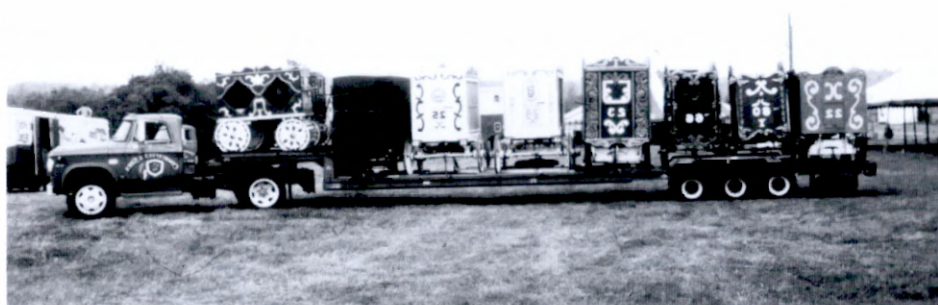


Jaime Garcia's Circo de Espectacular at the Rockland County Fair in New York in July. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

with his family's wheel of death, motorcycle globe, and trapeze acts. Arthur Duchek had a tent show at a fair at the Meadowlands complex in New Jersey from June 20 to July 7. Acts included Anita Zoppe, Spanish web; Joe and Betty Naud, chimps; Dennis Zoppe, gorilla parody; David Rosaire, dogs; and producer Duchek in his King Arthur high wire routine. Wanda Kaye led the band. A circus at a Livonia, Michigan fair in June as part of the Wade Shows Carnival used Baron Julius von Uhl with his cats, the Flying Ibarra, Brian Cristiani with the elephants, and Patti Zerbin with a cage act. Producer Gilbert Miller was announcer.

Jorge Barreda had his annual exhibition at the Mississippi State Fair in October. Among the acts were Lou Ann Jacobs with the elephants, juggler T. J. Howell, John Welde's bears, aerialist Billy Barton, the Ibarra family in their three acts, and Barreda himself with the cats. Charles Slavin had circuses on the Reithoffer Shows midway at three fairs near Philadelphia and New York City during the spring and summer. Frank Curry produced the circus at the Tennessee State Fair in October.

Circusey cages used by the R. W. Commerford Petting Zoo. Bob Commerford photo.



The L. A. Circus was at a California festival in June, and had a number of spot dates through the year. Produced by Wini McKay, this open air one ringer had foot juggler Chester Cable, aerialist Pamela Hernandez, and Kari and Gary Johnson with their elephant Tai. McKay also produced a spot date under the title Imagine A Circus at Santa Monica in May.

Petting zoos, the descendents of 19th century travelling menageries, were also popular at fairs. They offered a combination of exotic and domesticated animals, from goats to sheep, to elephants and camels.

Among those on tour were Joe Hendrick who had the Texas State Fair, Bob Jones who worked the Ohio State Fair, and Dave Hale who exhibited at the Great Circus Parade. The king of the petting zoo operators was Robert W. Commerford who had a large number of engagements at fairs, festivals and corporate affairs. He also had early year run, which he promoted himself, in New York and New England armories and arenas featuring his elephants, camels, and giraffe.

Other circus related activities on fairgrounds included the Rix family bear show, today's answer to Grizzley Adams. The Back Yard Circus, a multi-unit enterprise which taught circus skills to kids, was booked at a number of fairs and a Louisville amusement park.

Many acts, particularly those of an aerial or thrill nature, found work as single attractions on midways. While fading, the great tradition of the side show was carried on by Ward Hall and Chris Christ, and a few others. John Bradshaw had his side show at New York's venerable Coney Island during the summer.

A gaggle of small, mostly one ring, shows played indoor dates, almost always functioning as a fund raising vehicles for charities such as PTAs and veteran's groups which were unable to contract with larger circuses. They frequently sold their tickets over the phone, and the telemarketing companies which promoted their bookings were occa-



sionally the target of investigations because of the huge cut they took for raising money for charities. Called "school shows" because of their wont to perform in school auditoriums and gyms, these aggregations usually trekked when the weather was cold, and generally played smaller communities, often the towns that saw tiny wagon circuses a hundred years ago.

Big John Strong was the biggest school showman. Attempts to unravel his many shows and routes were as daunting as figuring out the itineraries of the Zoological Institute which operated thirteen units in 1835. He used titles such as Children's Stage Show, and All Star Magic Circus Variety Show. It appeared he had about ten different strings of dates, some as short as a few days, others as long as long as four and a half months. In some cases he sold the entire package to the sponsor; in others, he simply sold the acts to a promoter who did the rest. Engagements were played in both the American and Canadian West, the Southwest and the Midwest. Many, many performers spot dated for him. At Columbus in December, for example, the acts included T. J. and Nancy Howell with their unicycle and juggling routines, Ramon Espana with his comedy knockabout and band balancing acts, Grace Hanneford with her dogs and birds, and clown Rick Legg. Dick Johnson was the announcer and performed magic, and Rick Percy led a three piece band.

Ron Bacon's Famous Cole Circus played mostly in the Ohio River Valley from March 10 to June 2, and again in the fall. At Cambridge, Ohio in March the talent included Irvin Hall on the unicycle and with baboons, Maurice and Julie Drougett with their dogs, Ann Duyk as Peachtree the clown, and Dick Johnson with magic and balloon animals. June Johnson was show manager, and Dave

Ramon and Peggy Mills Espana's Rimwood Circus a Keansburg, New Jersey amusement park in September. Frank D. Robie photo.



Epperly was musical director.

The Cole All Star Circus tromped through the hinterlands of New York state from January 5 to April 29, its longest route ever. Personnel with the show included Angela Null on the single trapeze, clown Mike Snider, magician Phil Chandler, jugglers Fernando and Irene Bautista, and contortionist Dora Bautista. Owner Billy Martin performed on the rola bola and in the gorilla parody routine. Still kicking at age eighty-five, dog trainer Rudy Cimse was probably the oldest active performer in the business. This one upgraded with the addition of several props, including chaser lights for the ring curb.

Jim Nordmark's Kristy Bros Circus was in evidence, but just barely. Little route information surfaced, but it did leave a record of an appearance in Syracuse in June, and a couple of engagements in Ohio in July. Acts included the Bertinis with their unicycle and juggling routines, Stephanie Chapman Dubsy with an uncaged leopard, Rietta Wallenda on single trapeze, and Harry James Dubsy with his hand balancing act featuring a one finger stand. It appeared that Nordmark bought out Harry Dubsy's Circus Galaxy on some dates while on others Dubsy contracted directly.

Tommy Lunsford's American Showtime Circus visited the South during spring and fall tours. James Clement with his elephant, Stu and Sara Miller with an uncaged leopard, and clown Ned Siegle appeared on the spring dates. Mike Naughtin's Yankee Doodle Circus was in New York state from March 7 to March 27. Among the talent were Michelle Har-



The Albert Rix Bear Show was a feature at many fairs, including the one in Orange County, New York. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

California on July 4 included the Shooting Stars' high dive act, Pietro Canestrelli doing comedy knockabout, Jens Larson on aerial rings, Ricardo Canestrelli on the tight wire, and the Flying Castles. Owner Chuck Burnes was announcer.

Circus Fantasy was in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky for eight weeks in the fall. Owner Byron Bowman performed magic and was ringmaster, and Joe Silverlake did a perch act, juggled and rola bolaed. This one was sponsored by a missing children's association. The Wonderland Circus played schools in South Carolina from January 18 to February 15. Owner Bill Brickle ringmastered and presented his dogs. The Circle City Circus had a few dates in Florida and Alabama in September. The Diane Wilson seals, foot juggler Vickie Howle, and Tony and Irene Fossett with their chimps and gorilla parody routine were on the bill. Producer Dave Duyk was the ringmaster. James La Dini's Children's Magic and Variety Show was in Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut in March and April. Jim and Millie Perry did much of the show with their comedy balancing, plate spinning, and rola bola acts. La Dini did magic in the performance.

Jose Cole had his annual run in the upper Midwest starting March 1, and another in the fall. Tom Demry with his elephant, Patti Antelak with her dogs, Herbie Weber on the wire, and the Bruski family on bicycles were with him. Paul Lee's Magic Show was in the Midwest in February. Lee performed magic, Casey Cainan juggled, and Curtis Cainan presented his barnyard review. Gary Strong hit six Louisiana towns from November 30 to December 6. Among the actors were Eddie Steeples with his bears and chimps, Ari Steeples on the rola bola, Laura Steeples on web, and Nino Murillo doing



hand balancing. Ringmaster Phil Chandler also performed magic. Bill Reynolds' Reynolds Family Show had an indoor route in the Midwest in the spring and fall, and an under canvas fair date in August. On the fall route were Bobby and Sonya Fairchild with whips and knife throwing, Travis Green with magic, and clown Gary Noel.

The Century All Star Circus opened in Edmondston, New Brunswick on May 6 and closed in Stephenville, Newfoundland on June 16. The performers were the Bautista family with juggling, hand balancing and contortion, Ron and Robin Dykes on the low wire, on the unicycle and with an aerial cradle, Jim Arneberg's dogs, clown Graham Arhart, and Bill Morris with two elephants. Phil Chandler did magic when he wasn't announcing the show. The tour marked the long anticipated return of owner Al Stencell who sat out the 1990 season. He circused the old fashioned way with no sponsor and heavy advertising. Marc Verreault had his Cirque Universale in Quebec from May 7 to June 24. Rex Horton and his Wonder Bears were among the displays. While reports were vague, it appeared George Garden's Sparling Bros. had a week to ten days of dates in Ontario.

Circus Europa made appearances in theaters with a number of them coming at year's end. In October it appeared at Hawaiian colleges under the auspices of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. The acts on the islands included Giovanni Zoppe on the trapeze, the Ivanov troupe on the Russian swing, Tino Wallenda-Zoppe on the high wire, the Pietro Canestrelli family with a teeterboard routine, Ricardo Canestrelli on the low wire, and the Wainwrights' living statue act. Phil McDonald was ringmaster. In July owner Alberto Zoppe leased his equipment to the Beeman Bros. Circus.

The Pickle Family Circus played New England, New York and the Midwest in April and May before going home to San Francisco for the Memorial Day weekend. It was back in New York in June, and the season closed with the traditional San Francisco run. Founder Larry Pisoni, aka clown Lorenzo Pickle, returned to the show after a five year absence for the Christmas date. He was accompanied by juggler Jay Laverdue, clown Diane Waskanak, and a number of Chinese performers. This organization had fewer dates than in the past and experienced some major personnel changes as co-founder Peggy Snider left the company as did the business manager.

The non-profit Make A Circus appeared in parks, recreation centers and auditoriums in the San Francisco area from June to October. Supported by the local parks department, this outdoor show had a plot line with an uplifting message for inner city kids. The performers also taught circus skills. The Chinese Magic Revue was in the Midwest in October and presumably elsewhere at other times. It featured trick cycling, plate spinning, and tumbling. The Soviet Acrobatic Review toured the country with displays of high and low wire, contortionism, and ring balancing. It played au-



Knott's Berry Farm near Los Angeles paraded during the summer with a number of wagons built by Peru's International Circus Hall of Fame. John Fugate photo.

ditoriums. Gary Lashinsky's Lipizzaner horse show had lots of dates, including a second unit at the Excalibur Hotel in Las Vegas.

Circuses were popular entertainments at amusement and theme parks. The performance at Baraboo, Wisconsin's Circus World Museum included aerialist Mark David Pilger, the Zoppe riders, Lou Ann Jacobs with her elephants, cat trainer Jorge Barrera, the Carrillo brothers on the high wire, and juggler T. J. Howell. The clowns were Bill Machtel and Jimmy Williams who celebrated his 25th anniversary as Happy the clown. Howell had a big top wedding when he and Nancy Fisher were married on August 31. Near the end of the year, executive director Greg Parkinson signed a contract with Wayne McCary of the Eastern States Exposition to place a traveling exhibit of the museum's treasures at the West Springfield, Massachusetts fair next September.

The Rimwood Circus appeared at a New Jersey amusement park for three weeks in August and September. Owned by Ramon and Peggy Mills Espana, the performance included the Carin Cristiani elephants, the Plunkett family, and Sander and Elizabeth Raski, two midgits who had a snake act. Great Escape

Amusement Park in Lake George, New York featured the Flying Cortez, the Urias globe of death, Lilli Anna Kristensen with her leopards, and Jose and Roberto Torres on the slack wire. New York's Catskill Game Park was the summer home for Dick Kohlireser's dogs and ponies, John Welde's bears, and Buckles Woodcock's elephants.

Knott's Berry Farm near Los Angeles had a circus during the summer which included cannonballer Rebecca Smith, Jason Starr on the sway pole, Jay Cochran on the high wire, Joseph Dominic Bauer in the wheel of death, Sylvia Zerbini on the single trapeze, and Don Otto on the comedy trampoline. The park featured a number of the replicas of old-time parade wagons built by the International Circus Hall of Fame, one of which was a recreation from the Albert H. Wetter Circus, a long forgotten wagon show of the 1890s.

The Incredible Acrobats of China appeared at Marine World Africa USA in Vallejo, California during the summer. Tampa's Busch Gardens provided work for many circus acts throughout the year. The hand balancing Alexis brothers, Dolly Jacobs on the Roman rings, juggler T. J. Howell, hand balancer Yuri Krasnov, and the Pantalenko brothers of Russian strap fame all cashed pay checks from this attraction. Orlando's Disney World had circus acts during the summer including the Winn's wheel act, sky cycle and sway pole.

When Beeman Bros. Circus opened at Old Town in Kissimmee, Florida on July 4 it was to be a permanent attraction, but as is often the case in the show business it closed early on July 21. Organized by Jerry Beeman and Dick Wilson, the performance included Jackie Althoff with his bears, Gene and Eleanor Mendez on the high wire, Heidi Herriott with her horses, Bill Morris with his elephants, and Roger and Pam Zoppe with their chimps. David Locke was ringmaster, and Richard Rosio directed the band. The equipment and tent was leased from Alberto Zoppe. George and Vicki Hanneford operated their circus at the Thunderbird Swap Shop, a huge flea market in Fort Lauderdale. The artistic personnel changed throughout the year as acts left for other bookings and new ones came on. Some of the talent working this spot were Jim and Tapa Hall with bears, aerialist Mark David Pilger, the Hanneford family elephants, juggler Bob Welz, Katherine Hanneford with liberty horses, and illusionist Elliot James. RIP: Jim Grogan's Dells Crossroads park which had provided employment for many acts.



Three circuses were outreach efforts for religious groups. The Royal Lichtenstein Circus, founded by Jesuit Priest Nick Weber, was the most established of this type operation. Playing both indoors and out, it opened in Florida in early in the year, playing through the South and Midwest on its way to San Jose, California where it closed on June 1. No engagements after that date were reported, although the show was most likely on the road. The hour and a half performance featured eighteen acts including juggling, rola bola, high wire, magic, fire eating, aerial displays, goats, and a miniature horse named Dan Rice. Two narrated mime fables about friendship and giving were also part of the show. Calling itself the World's Smallest Complete Circus, it moved on three Wells Cargo trailers.

Circus Kingdom, sponsored by the Calvary United Methodist Church in Pittsburgh, didn't have a summer tour because of last minute sponsor cancellations and the hospitalization of founder L. David Harris. It did have, however, a three date mini-tour in Pennsylvania and West Virginia school gyms in October, and a December 27 to January 11, 1992 route in Florida, using the Phills Bros. equipment. This one was made up of students, many of whom received college credit for trouping. One of the show's goals was to provide a starting point for aspiring circus professionals, many of whom later found work in the business.

Circus Maranatha, the most evangelical of the trio, had at least three engagements in Florida in October and November. Founder and high wire walker Tino Walenda-Zoppe discussed his faith during the performance.

The spot date, the formulating of a circus for a very short time, often only at one location for one or two performances, was an under reported segment of the business. Doubtless, in some cases these shows may have been bookings by well known producers using a different title or whose connection was not explicit. While these troupes were an inconsequential part of the industry, they exemplified the remarkably fluid nature of the business.

Josey Barkin had a September date in North Hollywood under his two pole 40 foot by 70 tent which sat about 450. The actors included Henry and Dolores Crowell on the comedy trampoline, the hand balancing Mikai duo, Ray Grant with his marionettes, and clown Dick Monday. Barkin was also in Glendale, California on December 21-22 with the Ibarra family and their many acts, Douglas Mac Valley

with a wheel of death, and the Olate dogs. Barkin was ringmaster, and veteran agent Gilbert Miller booked the acts.

The second annual Winterfest Circus Spectacular was held at the Southfield, Michigan Civic Center on January 26. The Ballantine Circus, presumably promoted by Toby C. Ballantine, was a fund raiser for a school association in Bensonhurst, New York in June. Circus Munoz was indoors in two Texas towns on December 22-23 with Joe Long's bears, and the Plunkett and Munoz family acts. The Gentry Bros. Circus, a revered name in circus an-



The Edmundo Crotez family does the passing leap at Great Escape Amusement Park at Lake George, New York. Note poleless tent and Urias globe of death in background. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

nals, hurrahed again in its old home town of Bloomington, Indiana as part of a festival from July 4-7. Local arenic talent was augmented by Susan Sheryll's Afghans, Carin Cristiani's elephants, Tony Smaha's Lippizanners, hand balancer Yuri Krasnov, and aerialist Lubov Pisarenkova. The Espanas' tent was used on this date. James Zoppe's Wide World of Horses was in Los Angeles from July 1-7. For what it's worth department: The Tiny Tot Circus was in Little Rock on August 17.

Bob Snowden had the Royal American Circus in Nassau, Bahamas for a week near year's end. Among the talent were Bill Brickley's poodles, Doug Terranova with the Don Johnson tigers, Rex Horton's bears, the Bill Morris and Harry Craig elephants, Nick and Roberta Winn in the sky wheel, Gene and Eleanor Mendez on the high wire, and the Flying Alvarez. A casino-hotel sponsored the show which was held under a rented Harold Barnes tent. The Grand Circo Italiano was in San Juan for six weeks starting on June 20. Two local promoters produced the show using the Circo Tihany equipment in-

cluding the big 4000 seat Canobbio tent. The Flying Espanas, Carol Marcan with her tigers, and Carmen Hall with her baboons were on the bill.

The youth circus flourished. Paul Pugh's Wenatchee Youth Circus played twenty-one towns in Washington from June 8 to September 14. In its 39th season, the 65 performers were all teenagers. Florida State University's Flying High Circus was at Georgia's Callaway Gardens from mid-June to late August. The venue was a permanent plastic big top which covered the area of about a 120 foot round top with three 40 foot middle sections. Redlands, California's Great Y Circus appeared over two week ends in June with ninety young performers.

Bloomington, Illinois' High Flyers Family Circus worked on July 27-28. Sarasota's venerable Sailor Circus, founded in 1949, was produced in April. Headed by Bill Lee, its performance had a twenty-five girl web act. In January the troupe appeared at the Circus Windjammers convention in Sarasota where John Herriott was guest ringmaster. Peru's Circus City Circus was part of that city's July circus festival. In August, the troupe performed in Muncie, Indiana for two days.

Bruce Pfeffer's Circus of the Kids taught circus skills to children at an upstate New York camp. Circus Smirkus in Greensboro, Vermont was another circus camp. Headed by Rob Mermin, it had guest teachers from the Moscow Circus, and campers from Lativa. This one went on the road, playing fifteen New England towns under canvas. The Unicorn Circus in Pennsylvania was another circus camp. The National Circus Project taught children circus skills and gave short demonstrations in many schools in the East.

A number of benefit exhibitions were conducted by generous showfolk during the year. Thirty-five acts participated in the performances held in conjunction with Sarasota's circus festival in early January. Jeanette Williams was the producer, and the Nerveless Nock's aerial helicopter routine was selected best overall act. The Gibsonton, Florida Showman's Club annual circus was held on January 12 under Allan Hill's big top to raise money for local charities. Buckles Woodcock and Ben Williams' elephants, Wayne Franzen's tigers, Stu Miller's miniature horse, John Welde's bears, magician Brian LaPalme, and juggler Pat Davison were in the exhibition. Charles Schlarbaum had the band, and the inimitable John Herriott was ringmaster. Serge Coronas produced the Showfolks Circus in Sarasota on December 7. Among the artists were Lance-





Rider Kim Karoly on Hanneford Shrine date at Columbus, Ohio in April. Dale Haynes photo.



Juggler Justino Zoppe and his mother and father worked many dates throughout the year. Paul C. Gutheil photo.

lot Ramos with three lions, two tigers, a leopard, and two black panthers, Mike Donoho in the wheel of death, Jeanette Munoz on the cloud swing, the Helikon troupe on the Russian bar, and Scott Taylor with snakes and a lizard.

Many circus performers had paydays at sport shows, ice shows trade shows, car dealerships, corporate events, cruise ships, and even on Broadway. Showrooms in Nevada and New Jersey casinos provided a number of jobs. Circus Circus Casino employed, among others, the Flying Caballeros, and contortionist Rudolph Delmonte at its Las Vegas branch, and the Flying Gaonas with Tito Gaona at its Reno resort. At year's end the Flying Cavarettas left Circus Circus in Vegas after twenty-three years. The act's star, Terry Cavaretta, was arguably the finest female flying trapeze artist ever. The Arabian Nights Dinner Theater near Orlando used many equestrians in its production including Gaylord Maynard with his comedy horse Chief Bear Paw, and Caroline Williams, daughter of Jeanette Williams. Former Big Apple roper Vince Bruce and Tom and Bonnie Brackney's dogs were featured in *The Will Rogers' Follies*, a hit Broadway show.

War jitters caused the cancellation of the Monte Carlo Circus Festival, and greatly curtailed attendance at the Paris festival in January. Felix Adler Days were held in Iowa in June. The International Clown-Theatre Congress met in Philadelphia that same month. Judy Finelli of the Pickle Family Circus was the keynote speaker. A combined reunion of alumni from the old Cole Bros. Circus and from Dailey Bros. Circus was held in Sarasota during the circus festival. The 16th annual Circus of the Stars broadcast aired in May. The popular show trivialized the years of practice performers put into difficult routines.

In other news, Peru's International Cir-

cus Hall of Fame inducted human cannonball W. W. Wilno, wire walker Harold Alzana, and executives Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell, worthies all. Sarasota's Ring of Fame added Elly Ardelty, James A. Bailey, Otto Griebing, the Loyal-Respensky riders, and Gunther Gebel-Williams. Delavan's Clown Hall of Fame honored former Ringling clowns Bobby Kaye, Frankie Saluto, and Frosty Little. Also enshrined were Dan Rice and Russian clown Michael "Coco" Polakov.

Ending decades of demurrage, John and Mabel Ringling, along with his sister Ida Ringling North, were finally buried on the grounds of Sarasota's Ringling Museum of Art on June 4. The 1944 Ringling-Barnum fire was in the news again as a Hartford fire investigator went public with his research.

Bucky Steele's Asian elephant Wimpey gave birth in the spring. Wire walker Angel Wallenda was a recipient of the Norman Vincent Peale Award for positive thinking. Actor Eric Sorg had a one man show doing Buffalo Bill. A group of Strobbridge circus and theatrical posters was displayed at the Paine Webber Building in New York City. Robert F. Houston organized an exhibit on blacks in the circus at a Philadelphia museum.

Deaths during the year included: Marian Cristiani, widow of Oscar Cristiani; Nita Krebs, Ringling and Singer midget; John Eck (nee Eckhardt), half-man on Ringling; Eva Mae Lewis, first wife of Emmett Kelly; Bob Parkinson, founder of the Circus World Museum's library; Bob Top (nee Voight), marketing director for Beaty-Cole; Linda Conners, aerialist; Melvin "Fuzzy" Plunkett, animal trainer and all-around showman; Catherine Rooney Romig, old-time performer who started in the 1910s; Pat Kay, widow of Shrine producer Bill Kay; Paul Klemke, former aerialist on Ringling; J Y Henderson, retired Ringling veterinarian; Helen Haag Hayes, long-time trouper and daughter of Ernest Haag; Ralph Duke, old showman; Cyril Mills, English circus legend; Walter B. Hohenadel, former *White Tops* editor;

Doug Morris, ex-Ringling lighting director; Bob Noell, gorilla impresario; Joseph Gatti, show owner; Roger Boyd, career showman; Noyelles Burkhart, retired Cole and Ringling executive; Charles King, founder of King Charles troupe; Herbie Weber, fabled wire walker; Bernie Mendelson, tent manufacturer; Robert Behee, former flyer; and Tom Inabinette, long-time showman.

This compilation would be far less comprehensive were it not for the kindness of strangers and friends who generously sent me a unending stream of data throughout the year. This monograph's merits are the result of their thoughtfulness; its shortcomings, which are doubtless legion, are mine alone. I thank them all. This year's heroes are: Bill Biggerstaff, Joe Bradbury, Arnold Brito, Jerry Cash, Mike Cecere, Herb Clement, Bob Commerford, Fred Dahlinger, Jim Dunwoody, Bill Elbirn, Carla Emerson, Roland Gibbs, John Goodall Stuart Gordon, Paul Gutheil, Deborah Haney, Al House, Paul Ingrassia, Pat Inskeep, Sheelagh Jones, Blake Kellogg, Toni Kelner, Larry Kent, Tommi Liebel, Frank Mara, Mike Martin, Bill Milsap, David Orr, Greg Parkinson, Tom Parkinson, Fred Pfening, Jr., J. Scott Pyles, John Polacsek, Dave Reddy, Richard Reynolds, Bill Rhodes, Dale Riker, Frank Robie, Ron Sanford, Peter Siereson, Mike Sporrer, Al Stencell, Leroy Sweetland, Frank Thompson, Gi Gi Tegge, Tim Tegge, Enrico and Debbie Wallenda, Warren Wood, William Woodcock, and Tom White. Special thanks to Bobby Gibbs, who loves the circus more than anyone else I know. My apologies if I have missed anyone. As always, *Circus Report*, edited by Don Marcks, the late twentieth century's answer to Warren Patrick, was indispensable. *Amusement Business*, *Showfolks of Sarasota Newsletter*, *White Tops* and various CFA top and tent publications were also useful.



Circus history records several individuals who were lacking in basic circus experience but just had to get into the business with their own show. Frank C. Snyder was one of them. He lived in the small community of Red Creek, New York, (population approximately 626 in 1990), located a few miles south of Lake Ontario. Snyder was born in that area around 1900.

In 1984 Bill Foley, a local writer, published an article on Snyder's life after interviewing his widow Ethel. In it she noted, "Ever since he was a kid he loved the circus. He went to any circus and he just had to go on the road."

When Snyder headed his own show, he was a rural mail carrier, a prize position during the depression in the early 1930s. He resigned his job as mail carrier, taking leaves when he went out on the road. He usually had a full time experienced manager with the show.

The show was framed in Red Creek in the early spring of 1931. He kept some of the animals in a barn behind his house on Main Street, while others were housed on a farm just outside of town. Mrs. Snyder said the show's official headquarters was located next to the bank. The big top, cookhouse, and other tents were erected for the first time in the spring of 1931 at the Red Creek airport.

The circus world received the first news of Snyder's new show in the April 4, 1931 *Billboard*. The article was headed, "Snyder Bros. to move on 10 trucks." Dated Red Creek, New York, March 28, the story read: "Snyder Bros. Circus in quarters here will open the first week of May. The outfit is to be transported on 10 trucks, four will pull cage trailers.

"A new side show top with new banner front, and new cookhouse, horse and marquee tops have been received. The big top will be a 60 with two 30s, with seating capacity of 700. The program is to be presented in two rings. A parade will be given. A calliope is to be used in addition to the big show band to play the program.

"Henry Hamlin, boss canvasman, has arrived in quarters. Frank Snyder, manager, and Lee Smith, assistant, have returned from a trip to New York City. They closed contracts to play several parks in the East."

A week later the *Billboard* said that Stoltz's band would be with Snyder Bros. In a piece from Dayton, Ohio, dated April 4, the roster of Perry Stoltz's band, listed Stoltz, director; Dan Roby, William Tracy, George Bray, cornets; Pete Larson, Joe

## SHORT SKETCHES OF FORMER SHOWS

# The Frank Snyder Circuses SNYDER BROS. 1931-32 COLE & ROGERS 1934

BY JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

Brady, clarinets; Charles Bernier, Dick Best, trombones; Billy Jean, sousaphone (bass); William Mattis, and Phil Worth, drums. It was noted that special arrangements by Billy Jean were to be used on the show. A number of indoor dates had been played by the band during the winter.

Mrs. Snyder said in the interview: "We went all around the country to find and buy acts; we found other acts in the *Billboard*." A May 9 *Billboard* article said that R. C. Sheffer had left to join the Snyder Bros. Motorized Circus. He was to be special agent and bannerman. During the prior several weeks he had been presenting a circus novelty in theaters, using animals quartered at the W. L. Main winter quarters there. Mrs. Sheffer, daughter of William (Honest Bill) Newton of the Walter L. Main Circus, was to accompany him on tour.

The Snyder show opened May 2 in Red Creek to two full houses. The May 23 *Billboard* told the story of the show's inaugural. The article mentioned that Lee

Snyder Bros. Circus side show, marquee and big top in Norwich, New York in May 1931. Author's collection.

Smith was manager. At Sodus, New York on May 4, John R. Van Arman, former circus owner, and Grant Allman were visitors. Other notes said that Ray Thompson joined the band at Dundee, and Prof. J. F. Irvin's dog act was scoring, as was Jimmy White and the clown band. There was a light matinee in Dundee but a packed house at night.

The mention of the visit of John R. Van Arman reminds us that there were many circus owners from upstate New York. From the early 1800s on through the 1930s and 1940s many of these men operated

small and medium sized overland shows. One of the best known was Sig Sautelle out of Homer who died in 1928. In the 1930s Norman Ferris and Clayton Hawks were New York small show owners. The 1940s brought forth the well known James M. Cole.

The *Billboard* did not publish a full account of the 1931 Snyder performance. A number of acts and performers were mentioned in its coverage during the season. These accounts plus the notes of the late Isaac Marcks document the program.

August (Gus) Kanerva, later was listed as equestrian director but probably had the job from the start, was a most versatile performer. He performed on the flying trapeze and was a head and hand balancing artist. Some sixteen years later on Kelly-Miller he was still presenting three or four acts in the performance. His wife, Lee, also did aerial numbers. In addition to Prof. Irwin's dogs, Prof. J. Simmis had a dog act. Buck Leahy, like Gus Kanerva, was another versatile performer. His speciality was clowning and comedy numbers. He had a comedy Roman ring act in 1931, among others. Vogel Crawford presented a slack wire number. Ethel Chenette was a menage rider. Roy Leonart







Frank Snyder, at left, posed with a clown in front of one of the show's trucks. Photo from Red Creek Herald. Paul Horsman collection.

put on a one man baseball game, and the Ralph Duvail trio was in the program with an acrobatic number. Tex Chennette was in charge of the wild west after show and no doubt appeared in the main performance, as was often the case. Monkeys and ponies were also in the show. The program was certainly adequate for a ten truck show.

There was no specific mention of an elephant on the show in either 1931 or 1932. There was definitely one in 1934. Mrs. Snyder in her interview said the show had a camel, lions, a bear, monkeys and horses. On the midway was a traditional side show, with a bannerline, managed by Ed Simpson.

A street parade was given each day during the initial season. A photo shows the big top band on a straight bed, neatly painted and titled truck on the lot ready for a parade. Also available for parade duty was the side show band, the clown band, air calliope, and several cage trailers of wild animals. All of these along with the show's lead stock, and elephant and camel if present, made an adequate parade for a show of this size.

Mrs. Snyder said the show traveled the main roads and never played the sticks. She recalled it was difficult to get over the poorly marked roads. They had to mark the route by putting large chalk mark arrows on utility poles so those units behind knew where they were going. Chalked arrows were standard through the 1930s, and were used until the time heat from local officials put an end to the practice. This necessitated the current method of using small cardboard markers

taped to poles and highway signs.

Although Mrs. Snyder stated the show used main roads and didn't play the sticks, Snyder Bros. appeared in some small burgs, many of them difficult or impossible locate on current maps.

The first month and a half saw the show sticking to mainly small towns in its native state. The route was rarely published in *Billboard*,

but many dates could be located in news reports from the show. Often these reports were small social items of visits by various individuals. The show exhibited at Painted Post shortly after start of the season, and at Corning, one of the larger cities played.

A string of dates gives an idea of the stands played; May 20, New Berlin; 21, Cincinnatus and 25, Whitley Point.

The show played a few early dates in northern Pennsylvania as evidenced by a story in the May 30 *Billboard*. It said that Snyder Bros. had received a new light plant and four new trucks at Hallstead. August Kanerva had also bought a new truck. The report said the show had received some good notices along the route. It encountered a windstorm at Forest City, Pennsylvania, but despite this business was very good. Bainbridge, New York, also was a good stand.

The June 6 *Billboard* said that Prince Milo, sword swallower, with 101 Ranch wild west show in 1929, joined Snyder at Windsor, New York. The Clacks joined at Greene, in the same state; their speciality was never identified. Some of the social notes which often appeared in the *Billboard* said Steve Buckley, of the Buckley brothers hand balancing act, visited at Windsor and Buck Leahy had visited the

Snyder concession stand, ticket trailer and big top in Norwich, New York. Author's collection.



St. Leon Bros. Circus in Binghamton. Final notes said that Vogel Crawford was scoring big with his slack wire act, and attendance had been good at Oxford, New York.

The June 20 *Billboard* mentioned several happenings with Snyder Bros. at its Pennsylvania stands. At Sayre Ken Couchman closed with the show and planned to open his own magic show. Ed Simpson's side show had a big day at Dallas, and Ethel Chennette had a fall from her horse at Shickshinny but had not missed a performance. Other notes said that Charles Sparks, owner of Downie Bros. Circus, Al (Weedy) Pinard, the Wilson Trio, Tom Singleton, Willie Owens and Slim Moore and wife had been recent visitors. All of these names were well known in circus circles in those days. The article further stated that Gus Kanarva and Frank Snyder were breaking a new principal bareback horse. Josie Simpson, mind reader, and Prince Milo, sword walker, were going over big in the side show.

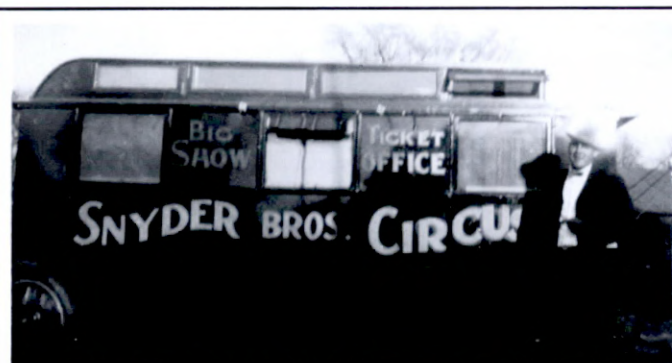
In early July *Billboard* said that a storm came up on June 20 at Richfield Springs, New York. The big top was blown down just before opening doors for the night show down causing cancellation of the performance. No one was injured. Al F. Wheeler of the Wheeler & Sautelle circus was a visitor that day. Additional items said that Roy Lenhart joined at Oriskany Falls and Buck Leahy, comedy ring act, was scoring. There was a light matinee but big night house at Sidney.

The August 22 *Billboard* said the show was still playing dates in its home state. The Original Texas Slim Collins and Montana Bell had joined Snyder at Pawling. The Clacks closed at Margarettsville to play fairs. Bennie Kenner closed at Waldon to join the Al G. Fields Minstrels. The article noted that the show experienced good business at Branchville, New Jersey, the first indication Snyder Bros. had played in that state. Three new ponies were added at Bushville, Pennsylvania. At Nyack, despite heavy rain, business had been very good. The article concluded by saying that Ralph Schaffer continued to have a good line of banners. These hung in the big top as well as often being placed on parade units, a valuable source of additional revenue.

The Marcks file indicates Snyder Bros. played Blairstown, New Jersey on July 20 and probably made other stands in the state.

The September 5 *Billboard* carried an item that





The ticket-office trailer also served as living quarters for Mr. and Mrs. Snyder. Author's collection.

Snyder cancelled its planned date at Johnson City, New York on August 21 due to a misunderstanding about the license. The following day at Endicott, New York, Fred T. Slater, described as an old timer, visited the show. He reported that for a small show Snyder Bros. had a very good and peppy program. Attendance at the matinee was rather small, but the evening turnout was much better.

The Endicott stand was the final one mentioned in either the *Billboard*, or the Marcks notes. Possibly, the show closed shortly thereafter and returned to its Red Creek quarters. In mid October the *Billboard* said that Lee Smith and Roy Lenhart, late of Snyder Bros., had joined the Wheeler & Sautelle big show program. That show was playing the coal fields of West Virginia. Later in October a report said that Buck Leahy, having closed the season with Snyder, was back home in Attleboro, Massachusetts. This was the last *Billboard* reference to the Snyder show.

### 1932

The January 16, 1932 *Billboard* reported that a large hanger at the Red Creek airport had been leased by Snyder Bros. Circus providing room for storage and work shops. Four trucks with tableau bodies were under construction and the training of several horses and ponies had started. Even with the new building the show still kept some animals at the in-town site. A few years ago Mrs. Snyder told Paul Horsman her husband kept a lion in the barn behind their house on the main street of Red Creek.

Very little other news appeared in the *Billboard* during winter and early spring of 1932 about the Snyder show. The March 26 issue had a short note that the show would feature a patriotic spectacle. This was prompted by the George Washington Bicentennial being celebrated that year. In 1932 other shows also took note of the anniversary. The Walter L. Main

circus featured a Washington theme in its spec. Downie Bros.' No. 1 bandwagon was decorated with large paintings of Washington crossing the Delaware.

Snyder advertised in the April 2 *Billboard* for useful people in all departments: big show performers doing two or more; side

show Hawaiian dancers and black musicians; a good auto mechanic; and a boss canvasser who could get it up and keep it in good repair. The privileges of tin type, farm paper, novelties, ball game and candy stands were for sale.

It was clear the show was anxious to get as much out of its concession take as possible. This was often a life saving method for small shows to keep going. Tin type photos, farm papers and the like were still big deals on the midways of small overland shows in the early 1930s.

In late April the *Billboard* announced that Snyder Bros. was ready to open its second season on May 7 at its Red Creek winter quarters. A number of animal acts were added. Henry Frederick had been reengaged as general manager. August Kanerva, flying trapeze performer, had been booked. The mention of Henry Frederick being "re-engaged" as general manager suggests that he held that position with the show at some time during 1931. If so, it was not reported in the *Billboard*.

During the next several weeks short items from the show appeared in *Billboard*. No opening review was published. One note said that Tex Chenette spent the winter at Red Creek putting the Shetland ponies of Snyder Bros. through their stunts. Another note said that Billy Dick and Art Powell, female impersonators and dancers, would be with the show. During these years many of the small and medium shows would have one or more female impersonators. Most were quite versatile performers. In addition to dancing in the spec and side show, they often worked aerial numbers, such as swinging ladder, cloud swing, and single trapeze. These individuals also often provided comedy clowning by working the "come-in," dressed in female attire. They would flirt with a woman's husband as they came into the big top before the show.

The advance crew left Red Creek on April 25. That department included: James B. Swafford, general agent; Glen H. Ingle, car manager; Harry Nicolas, boss billposter; Charles Ray, Art Comesky, Will Case, Charles Pembroke, billposters;

Lloyd Pembroke and Will Wandas, lithographers. Three trucks and two coupes were used ahead of the show.

James Livingston, a veteran circus trouper, visited the Snyder show a week or so after the opening and sent a report that appeared in the May 23 *Billboard*. Livingston said he had seen the show in Roscoe, New York where the performance had met with approval and good attendance.

While the entire 1931 route had been confined to New York, northern Pennsylvania, and a brief trip into New Jersey, the 1932 tour would take it rapidly after the opening into new territory in New England.

The show found plenty of opposition in that area. A headline in the June 4 *Billboard* read: "Many shows play Connecticut." The article said that three circuses had played the western section of the state that week. Snyder Bros. was the first and had fair business at New Canaan and New Milford, its initial two stands. Walter L. Main was the second, playing Stamford, where it found satisfactory business. Wheeler & Sautelle entered the state at Ridgefield. Ringling-Barnum and Sells-Floto were also due in Connecticut within two weeks. Ringling had billed Stamford and Sells-Floto South Norwalk.

The same *Billboard* provided limited details of the opening Snyder performance. The item noted that Horace Webb and Leslie Taylor (cornetist) and family attended the opening at Red Creek, New York. Webb stated that it was a small outfit with an attractive layout and a good performance. Freddie Guinup of Fulton, New York was working ponies. Eddie and Josie Simpson, old timers, also were with the show.

A week later *Billboard* noted stated that Frank H. Stowell, new owner of the Cole and Rogers Circus, had been a recent visitor. His son, Alfred J., and his general agent, James M. Beach, had been accompanied him. This is of interest because two years later, in 1934, Frank Snyder would use the Cole and Rogers title on his show.

The June 18 *Billboard* carried an informative article on the show headed, "Snyder Bros. on 12 trucks." Dated Fitchburg, Massachusetts, June 11, it said Snyder Bros. Circus and Wild West had been playing to fair business throughout New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, according to Henry Fredericks, general manager. There were sixty-two people on show which was moving on twelve trucks. The big top was a 70 with two 40s. The side show top was a 40 with two 30s. The ten piece band was under direction of Captain Miller. The wild



west was under Tex Chenette and Swede Johnson. Ed Simpson was side show manager. The kid show included the Simpsons, impalement; Ed Simpson, magic; Billy Dick, snakes; Clarence Mann, untamable lion act, Mabel Newsome and Francis Peaslee, dancers, a six piece band and several cages of animals.

The staff included Frank Snyder, sole owner; Henry Fredericks, general manager; Mrs. Frank Snyder, secretary-treasurer; Joseph Brown, boss canvasman and Tom Johnson, master of transportation. The show was heading toward New Hampshire and Maine.

Another report in the same issue, dated June 11, Gardner, Massachusetts said the show played there and due to very cold weather it was very difficult for the performers to work. A parade was given in Gardner. This was the first and only reference during the season that the show was parading. The parade was probably the same size and composition as the daily march of the prior year.

In July someone referred to Snyder Bros. in the *Billboard* as a dog and pony show. A rebuttal by a show official quickly appeared stating that the Snyder show was not a dog and pony outfit but a circus with a menagerie, side show, wild west and a ten piece band. A short *Billboard* item said that the Walter L. Main circus played Greenfield, Massachusetts on June 17; but Snyder Bros. had been there earlier. The town's selectmen refused to issue a license to Sells-Floto to play on June 25, stating there would be no more circuses in Greenfield for the rest of the season.

The Marcks files contain little about the program. Gus Kanerva was mentioned, saying he was capable of appearing in several acts. Also mentioned was a Miss Mable, trapeze act, the Teriney troupe, probably acrobats, and Jimmy DeKalb, producing clown. Neither Marcks or the *Billboard* mentioned an elephant.

A *Billboard* report said Arnold Frank Levenson, former Snyder Bros. press agent, had visited old friends with Wirth's Circus at Erie, Pennsylvania the week of August 1. This was the final *Billboard* reference to the Snyder show for the remainder of the season. Fortunately, we have the show's entire route for the 1932 season. It was out eleven weeks, opening May 7 in Red Creek, New York and closing July 23 at Plattsburg in the same state.

After opening the show played a full week of dates in the Empire State: Camden, Chittenango, Norwich, Afton, Roscoe, and Calicoon. A



## SNYDER BROS. CIRCUS AND WILD WEST

J. B. SWAFFORD  
GENERAL AGENT



Snyder Bros. Circus letterhead used in 1932. Pfening Archives.

single date in Pennsylvania at Newfound-land on May 16 followed. This was the only time the Keystone State saw Snyder in 1932. Three New York dates followed before going into Connecticut at New Canaan, May 20.

For a week the show played along the New York-Connecticut border moving back and forth between the two states, however after showing Pine Plains, New York on May 27 Snyder moved the next day to New Hartford, Connecticut. Six consecutive stands followed in that state.

Greenfield and Gardner were the only two dates in Massachusetts before a lengthy tour of New Hampshire. Milford was the initial stand, followed by Dorry, Pittsfield, and Rochester to complete the fifth week of the season.

Two additional weeks were played in the state with the final stand coming at Charlestown on June 25.

To begin the eighth week of the season Snyder Bros left the mill towns and villages of New Hampshire to return to its home state of New York. The first stand, Granville, was followed by Whitehall, Corinth, Warrensburg, Chestertown and North Creek. On July 4 the show was

This truck illustrates the attractive lettering and decoration used by the Snyder show. Author's collection.

at Indian Lake. The week ended on the 9th at Keeseville.

The show hoped the resort areas of up-state New York and a move away from the depressed industrial areas might help salvage the season. The ninth week found it playing Champlain, Ellenburg, Chateaugay, Moira, St. Regis Falls, and Fort Covington.

The tenth and final week of the season began at Waddington on July 19 followed by Winthrop. A couple of two day stands were played at Malone on July 20-21, and Plattsburg on 22 and 23, the last date of the season. The show closed without advance notice and returned to quarters at Red Creek.

In the interview Mrs. Snyder said she was often asked why her husband chose to launch his circus right in the middle of the depression. She replied that when they started out the depression was not evident around their part of New York state where there were mainly farms and small communities. Some areas of the United States that were mainly agricultural suffered less during the depression than highly industrial mill towns of New England. She said the show felt the full brunt of the depression in those towns. She said there was just no money and it was pitiful seeing people starving with no work available.

Mrs. Snyder didn't comment about the show not touring in 1933, leaving the reader to think it was out for three consecutive seasons, which was not the case.

It is not known if any of the animals or equipment had been sold following the close of the 1932 tour. It appears that the show was pretty well kept intact awaiting economic developments before deciding to get out of the business or go on the road again.

Frank Snyder kept his job as a mail carrier during his career as a circus owner. After keeping the show in the barn during the 1933 season, he was again ready by the





spring of 1934 to take to the road again, this time using a new title.

### 1934 - Cole and Rogers

The depression had eased somewhat by time the 1934 circus season rolled around. The Roosevelt administration had been in power a year. Its answer to the situation was mainly a series of alphabet soup agencies, AAA, CCC, WPA, PWA. All were designed to create jobs. The RFC did the same for ailing industries, such as railroads. The effectiveness of all this is still debated in economic and political circles. In any event the alphabet soup agencies provided at least some temporary relief, enough so to convince several former circus men to try it again with their own shows. George W. Christy took a show on the road as did Howard King, but Elmer H. Jones wouldn't get in again until 1936.

Frank Snyder selected a new title, Cole & Rogers. Elmer Jones had used it on his three car gilly type circus from 1928 to 1930. The title had been revived in 1932 by Frank Stowell. It is not known if Snyder paid Jones for the use of the title. More than likely Snyder found a batch of Cole & Rogers paper on the Erie Litho Company shelves at a cheap price. Erie may have tossed in a supply of Cole & Rogers letterheads and contracts. After the 1934 season the title was never used again, indicating the paper supply had been depleted.

The first word that Snyder would field a circus appeared in the May 12 *Billboard*. Cole & Rogers advertised wanting people in all departments: a capable agent and lithographers at once to join on wire. The show also wanted a man with car to handle merchant tickets and press ahead; a band leader and musicians; an air calliope player to play with the band; big show performers doing two or more, one or two feature acts; a boss canvasman for big show and side show; an experienced circus electrician; an auto mechanic; seat men; riggers; a boss property man; circus cook; working men who drove trucks; side show ticket sellers and dancers; a colored band and minstrels and other acts suitable for first class side show. A wild west concert with stock and transportation was also wanted. Tex Burrill and Hank Donnell were asked to wire. The custard, lunch stand, ball game, novelties, candy stand, prize package candy, photo, and fortune teller privileges were for sale. The show wanted to buy 40 foot round ends, and one 20 or 30 middle for a 60 foot round top. Cole & Rogers also



Riverside stock lithograph used by Snyder Bros. Circus in 1932. Pfening Archives.

wanted to buy or lease an elephant. The cook house was open. All were to address Cole & Rogers Circus, Red Creek, New York.

This ad indicated canvas for the new show would be a 60 foot round the big top and a 40 for side show.

No details of any kind followed this initial advertisement. Another ad came in the June 2 *Billboard* which suggested that the big show had already opened and was on the road. This ad wanted truck circus acts for big show doing two or more; a good producing clown and a calliope player capable of playing with band. The show still was looking for colored musicians, musical and novelty acts, ticket sellers and a boss canvasman for the side show. A good proposition was offered for a wild west concert with own stock and transportation. A man to handle merchant tickets and press was still needed. The lunch, candy stands and novelties were still open. Those interested were to write the show at Owego, New York, on July 7.

Two weeks later the *Billboard* reported from Canton, Pennsylvania on June 9, that Cole & Rogers had

The title design in this 1934 newspaper ad was formerly used by Elmer Jones. Pfening Archives.

started its second week of the season Monday. A member of the troupe reported the show so far had mostly good weather and had played to some very good business. Three extra performances were given and there were packed houses at both Owego and Owego, New York. Big Rosie the elephant, August (Gus) Kanerva, and the riding Waltons were being featured. Around them a pleasing performance was built presented in two rings.

Another item in the same issue in the "Under the Marquee" section mentioned that Frank M. Farrell, Ithaca, New York, ventriloquist, was trouping a few weeks in the side show of Cole & Rogers Circus. Charles De Mont was side show manager. Others in the side show included Dagmar, magic, Punch, and lecturer; Mrs. Weaver, palmist; Reno, mentalist; Jan Tuin and children, and the Holland band.

From this report we can gather that the show opened on June 1 probably in Red Creek and had moved rapidly southward

into Pennsylvania. The elephant Rosie, according to the Woodcock files, was owned by Walter L. Main. Capt. Rudolph Muller worked the bull in the Cole & Rogers performance. The elephant probably came on a lease agreement along with a few other animals. Although the show appears to have used the same size tents as before the program was stronger, with an elephant and a heavier side show and wild west department. Nothing was ever written whether or not there was a street parade. It appears from the known dates that the towns were somewhat larger than those of earlier seasons.

A short *Billboard* note in late June quoted Clarence H. Jacoby, a circus enthusiast, who said that Cole & Rogers had a heavy matinee and gave two performances at night at Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. The second show was as heavily attended as the first. In fairness, however, he stated that it was "the first time any circus used

# WAIT

FOR THE BIG SHOW  
**FRI., JUNE 1st**  
ONE DAY ONLY! **SAYRE**



**A SHOW OF SUPREMELY STUPENDOUS SURPRISES**  
**EVERY ACT A FEATURE**  
**EVERY FEATURE A THRILL**  
**25 Famous Funny Clowns**  
Show Grounds—Tuscarora and Elmer Avenue

Performances—2 and 8 p. m.

**ADMISSION 25c to All**



a merchant's ticket tie-up in our town and it went over big."

The July 7 *Billboard* reported that E. S. Holland recently had joined Cole & Rogers to handle press and merchant's tickets. The advance staff also included Frank D. Berst, general agent; Bob Mills, advertising car manager; Al Fuller, boss lithographer; Victor Palmer, boss billposter, and Joseph Mott, 24 hour man. In the same issue the show advertised wanting big show performers; a boss canvasman for side show and outside concessions. Those interested were to contact Lester Patterson, manager as per route at Washington, New Jersey, July 5; Bath, Pennsylvania, July 6 and North Hampton, Pennsylvania, July 7.

The July 28 *Billboard* contained a Cole & Rogers ad wanting a dog and pony act with own transportation, musicians for big show band, working men to drive trucks, and dancers for side show.

An interesting article appeared in the August 4 *Billboard* in which E. S. Holland stated that Cole & Rogers recently had done three shows daily for five days starting at Hamburg, Pennsylvania. The town had been closed to circuses for eight years. General agent Berst had succeeded in opening it up. The show claimed it had but one losing week. Holland stated that he had been getting wonderful results with the press and also has been making good merchant ticket tie-ups. It was noted that Frank Snyder was owner of the show; Lester Patterson, manager; Kenneth Wheeler, auditor and Mrs. Frank Snyder, treasurer.

For several consecutive weeks the shows route was published in the trade publication. Beginning July 24 at Walton, New York, the show continued with Empire State dates at Delhi, 25; Sidney, 26; Norwich, 27; Shelburne, 28; Courtland, 29-30; Corning, 31; Bath, August 1; Dansville, 2; Warsaw, 3; LeRoy, 4, and Canandaigua, 5-6. A *Billboard* note in early August said that Cole & Rogers had very good matinee and night houses at East Bangor, Pennsylvania (date not given). Also mentioned was that Harry Hall had lately taken over the side show and was doing nice business. He worked Punch, needle threading, magic and several illusions.

The August 18 *Billboard* had an interesting little personal item. These were popular with circus troupers in those days. This one was headed: "Advance crews meet."

"The billers of Cole & Rogers under director of Robert Mills and Al Miller had just finished Richfield Springs, New York, when along came Ben Holmes, general agent of Jones Bros. wild west and billers under Bob Blondell to bill that town. Since they all had been together with an-



Cole & Rogers big top in Sayre, Pennsylvania on June 1, 1934. The Edith Walton horse act bus is in foreground. Pfening Archives.

other show they assembled and had a picnic. Mrs. Ben Holmes, visiting her husband, was elected cook. All had a good time eating and 'letting.' This was a term used for lying or ribbing where they were going next. The party broke up at dark.

For the first time ever the *Billboard* on August 25 published a full review of one of Frank Snyder's shows. It read: "Cooperstown, New York, August 17. Cole & Rogers Circus has been having some very good stands in this territory. Oneida was the banner spot of the season so far.

"The smoothly running program, under the direction of Gus Kanerva, was: Grand entry. Trained monkey, Jocko, in a series of stunts. Whip cracking by Buck Steele. Pony drill by Tillie Adams. Cloud swing, Ted Church. Comedy acrobats, Gus and Leota. Buck Weigan and his high school horse, Prince. Roman rings, Pat Church, Bobby and Leon Snyder. Trained ponies. Kanerva Troupe, featuring Gus Kanerva's head balancing. Clown number. Big Rosie, elephant, handled by Princess Mahanah. Iron jaw, Rosie Allen. Clown number (one-man magic by Ted Church). Wire walking dog, Trixie. Single trapeze number, Leota, Patricia and Bobby Snyder. Clown number. Kanerva troupe, hand balancing. High diving dog, presented by Tillie Adams. Capt. Rudolph and his performing camel, elephant, pony and dog. Swinging ladders, Pat Church and Lee Kanerva. Miss Arlette, prima donna. Riding school with mechanic.

"E. P. Flint directed the band, with John Phillips and Dave Rowland, cornets; Ray Thompson, trumpet; Frank Stevens, baritone; Robert A. Mills and Albert Fuller, trombones; Alfred Parmitter, clarinet; Harry Phillips, bass; Don Wallace, trap drums; Miss Wood, calliope and Henry Phillips base drum.

"The concert featured Buck Steele, also Tiger Bill, Jr. (Leo Snyder) and his company of western entertainers, Madge Snyder, Prairie Rose (Rosie Allen), Leon Snyder, Bobby Gordon, Arvin Snyder and

Chief Two Feathers, Bernice Steele. Buck Steele had his five fine horses and Snyder also had his stock.

"Side show manager Harry Hall's line up included: Cardo (E. A. Leffel), who paints pictures without paint; Princess Marajah, mentalist; Lillian Woods, sword box; Edward, magician; Hall, needle act. The animal annex has an elephant, camel, ponies, dogs, lions, bears, and monkeys.

"Lester Patterson is manager; Kenneth Wheeler, auditor; F. D. Berst, general agent; E. S. Holland, special agent and press; Joe Mott, legal adjuster; M. H. Wood, in charge of tickets; Bert Carroll, steward; Dan White, superintendent; Tom White, boss canvasman; John Smith, electrician; Harry Becker and Joe Popsel, mechanics. Mrs. Nora Forgans had a refreshment stand; Henry Phillips, popcorn. Kirk Adams has the pony ride."

An additional short note said that E. J. Kely had visited and photographed the show.

A week later it was reported that Col. M. L. Baker was then talker and selling side show tickets with Cole & Rogers. He also had the pit show with a fine banner front. Mrs. Baker was the lecturer and Tex C. Camp, talker and ticket seller. An ad was published wanting oriental dancers and colored musicians for the side show; a mechanic, a electrician, and a bannerman. Dates listed were August 30, Somerville; 31, High Bridge; September 1, Belvidere; all New Jersey, and September 2-3, Allentown; September 5, Birdsboro, Pennsylvania.

The September 15 *Billboard* carried a couple of short notes, one that the house car trailer of Col. M. L. Baker had been struck by an automobile between Surrren, New York and Somerville, New Jersey and was badly damaged. The other said that Ed C. Wood, earlier in the season with Hunt's Circus was now with Cole & Rogers, in charge of inside tickets. Mrs. Wood was prima donna. Also in the issue was an advertisement wanting a general agent who knew southern territory, and musicians on all instruments. Route given was September 13, Gaitersburg, Maryland, followed by a number of Virginia dates through September 20.

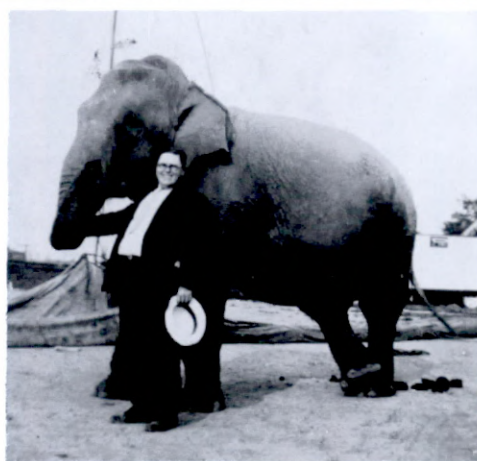


The following *Billboard* noted that Ben Holmes, general agent of Jones Bros. wild west, and his wife were recent visitors to Cole & Rogers. Virginia Naegely had joined the advance as assistant in the ticket department. Also there was a humorous note that two "elephants" had been recently photographed on the lot. One subject was Big Rosie, the real elephant, the other E. S. Holland, press agent, a pretty big fellow himself. The photo showing Big Rosie and the popular press agent was published in the September 29 issue.

Also in the September 29 issue was a Cole & Rogers ad wanting circus acts. Applicants were to make their salary low. A long season was promised. The show wanted to buy a 60 foot round top with three 30s, that had to be in good condition. Two Virginia dates were given, September 26, Victoria and 27, Blackstone.

The route had by then taken the show into new territory for Frank Snyder. New England had been completely avoided in 1934, no doubt due to the bad experience there two years earlier. The route was planned to extend the season several weeks. Competition was everywhere during the season but by late summer and early fall Virginia was a hot bed for circuses. The Hagenbeck-Wallace railer and Sam B. Dill and Tom Mix Wild West, one of the largest of the overland outfits, played stands in the state. Allen Bros. Wild West, which had opened and closed many times during the season, was still around.

The October 6 *Billboard* had considerable coverage about show. One item noted that E. P. Flint had closed as bandmaster and mail man to teach music in a grade school at Beauford, North Carolina during the winter. The main article dated Rocky Mount, Virginia, September 27, said that LeRoy Luciana recently had joined as bandmaster and had a very good band. The Snyder brothers, Bobby and Leonlare making a hit with their double trapeze act. The brothers were sons of Leo "Tiger Bill, Jr." Snyder, also on the show. The act was said to be plenty snappy and an outstanding number. E. H. Tucker had recently joined with his concessions, and they made a great flash. Tucker's agents were Walter McNeil, Charles Skinner, Tommy Cotterman, and Walter Ruckey. Continuing, the article said that the big show program was about the best it had been. Tiger Bill Jr. was breaking in a new pony drill. Auditor Kenneth Wheeler was working on an invention to keep the office wagon open 30 hours a day. A monkey had escaped for three straight days. They were different monkeys but none had been caught. Virginia Naegely had been making some



Cole & Rogers press agent E. G. Holland and Big Rosie the elephant. Bill Woodcock collection.

very good tie-ups in the guest ticket department. Evidently this was another term for merchants tickets. A final item said that Joe Mott recently joined the advance with his car, making four cars ahead.

Several short bits about Cole & Rogers appeared in the October 13 *Billboard* saying Floyd L. Quinn had joined as general agent and C. J. Sieg as billposter. It was reported the show's business had been on the upgrade since entering Virginia.

October 2 found Cole & Rogers at Salem, Virginia, followed by Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Radford, and Pulaski. On the 10th the show was in Abingdon. Two days later on October 12 after playing Bristol, the show suddenly closed. Little was written about the closing immediately, other than about the departure of some of the personnel. Gus Kaverna and wife Lee joined the Almond and Conley Circus for the rest of the season. Rube Eagan, who had earlier been with Conroy Bros. and later Cole & Rogers, arrived in Houston, Texas to play a string of fairs in that vicinity. Ed S. Wood and wife motored to Washington, D. C. where Mrs. Wood, vocalist and calliopiist was to play a night club.

The November 3 *Billboard* finally told the story of the Cole & Rogers close at Bristol but gave no details. The major part of the coverage was devoted to the framing of a new show. It noted that after Cole & Rogers closed E. S. Holland and Leo Snyder had organized the Tiger Bill Wild West with the cream of the former show's acts, including Capt. Rudolph Muller with his elephant, camel, Shetland pony, and Great Dane; Snyder Brothers (Leon and Robert), aerialists; Oklahoma Madge, cowgirl and Chief Two Feathers, Cherokee Indian; the tumbling Naegelys; Thomas F. White, clown; "Tiger Bill Jr.,"

five year old cowboy, and three clowns. Some other acts were to join shortly. The article noted that Tiger Bill put on an interesting performance and plans were being made to keep the show out all winter.

Leo Snyder was manager; Virginia Naegely, treasurer; E. S. Holland, advance; and John Brigham lot man. A final note said that manager Lester Patterson of Cole & Rogers had taken that show's equipment back to winter quarters at Red Creek, New York. He planned to have several promotions the coming winter. There was no mention of any equipment being sold or leased to the new Tiger Bill outfit.

It was not stated if the show would play under canvas or an outdoor setting. If the latter was used a minimum of equipment would have to have been obtained. A report coming in mid December said that Leo Snyder and E. S. Holland had dissolved their partnership. A new one had been formed between Ed S. Wood and Snyder. They were to have a Snyder Bros. Circus review playing movie houses in the South.

Frank Snyder's days as a circus owner were over. It is not known what happened to his circus equipment and animals. Snyder is said to have remarked that he drove all of his vehicles back and parked them on the main street in Red Creek in front of the bank then told officials there to come out and get them. Evidently it was either all, or partially, mortgaged and no longer belonged to the circus.

Snyder never lost his circus interest. In 1946 when James M. Cole, after his World War II military service, again put his circus back on the road, Frank was with it. He was superintendent of motor vehicles. Snyder may have also been with the Cole circus in later seasons. In 1957 Snyder was manager of Jimmie Cole's Circusland. This was a permanent type attraction located on the Cole property in Penn Yan, New York. Circusland also had Bill Brinley's model circus, Cole's elephant act, a pony ride, a steam train, and a rented grabstand. Charlie Lockier decorated the place and painted several old parade wagons on the fences and buildings. Cole had two of Prince Ki-Gor's lions, three or four larger Brinley wagons with animals, and a jungle howdah. The attraction operated in 1957 and perhaps longer. Jimmie Cole was on Hagen Bros. Circus as manager in 1958 and sold his elephants to that show.

Paul Horsman knew Frank Snyder and last saw him at a model builders meet in the 1970s. The date of his death is not known, but was it probably about 1980.

The author is indebted to Paul Horsman and Don Marcks for their help in the preparation of this article.



# New Year's Greetings

To all our Circus and Carny Friends



Al and Shirley Stencell

Royal Bros.--Martin & Downs--Super Circus International--  
Century All Star Circus



**I**t was fifty years ago when I first met the man considered the greatest bareback rider ever. On my second day as an usher on Ringling-Barnum in 1942, I found myself sitting on a grandstand gate handled by Lucio Cristiani. He directed the patrons to their seats and sold the extra chairs prior to the start of the performance. He left for the dressing room after the spec started and paid me a dollar a show to take his place.

Ernesto and Emma Victoria Cristiani produced sixteen children, eleven of whom survived to adulthood. Oscar, the oldest, was born in 1905; followed by Daviso, Lucio, Chita, Benito, Belmonte, Cossetta, Mogador (Paul), Ortans, Parieto (Pete), and Corcaito. Benito did not follow the family to America and died in France in 1942.

Papa Cristiani trained all of his children to perform in his circus. Lucio showed talent at an early age. As the top mounter in the tumbling act he took his first real buster at age twelve when he missed a landing on a four high. He suffered a concussion and remained unconscious for thirty-six hours. But he snapped back, and quickly returned to the ring.

Lucio's real love was bareback riding. He became interested in its dynamics and studied the physics of tricks he believed could be accomplished, planning routines that had never been done before. By sixteen he achieved his goal of throwing his body forward and leaping upward before somersaulting on a horse. The horse's speed carried him ahead, landing him less than two inches from his take-off point. He added ballet movements, making his performance an art form. He trained his brothers in the same technique and style, teaching brother Paul to do a horse-to-horse flip in four months rather than the usual two years.

In the early 1930s the Cristianis went to Paris where they were unknown. A spectacular routine was needed to attract attention. Lucio provided it, working hard to perfect a new trick, one that was so difficult that it could not be imitated or duplicated. It was the back somersault from one horse over the back of another onto a third horse. No one had done it before and no one has done it since.

He had planned the trick for a number of years, diagraming it on paper and attempting it with a mechanic. His father thought it

# LUCIO CRISTIANI

## The Equestrian Nijinsky

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

was sheer madness, but finally allowed him to proceed in perfecting it. This was the beginning of a whole new level of bareback riding which combined Lucio's grace in somersaulting with calculated risk. He later said a good rider needed to be a good mathematician.

His scheme was to have the horses gallop around the ring while closely grouped. Standing on the rump of the first horse he sprang backwards, twisting in the air and landing on the padded back of the third horse. As time went on he improved the routine until a few years later he filled the ring with horses, and bounced from one to another--horse-to-horse, ground-to-horse and horse-to-ground--with what seemed insane energy and inspired directed.

After six years of practice he introduced the full twisting somersault from horse-to-horse. When first presented at the Circus Medrano in Paris in 1932, he was awarded a gold medal by the show's management. A Paris newspaper dubbed him "an equestrian Nijinsky."

Later he trained his brother Belmonte in another spectacular trick. Belmonte executed a forward somersault from the second horse to the first while Lucio did a back somersault over him from the first

Lucio Cristiani somersaulting from horse to horse in the 1930s. Pfening Archives.

to the second. Another unusual trick used three horses. Lucio and Belmonte did back somersaults through a hoop from horse to horse while Paul did a somersault through a hoop to the ground. In the "flying mount," another signature routine, Lucio, Belmonte,

Oscar, and Daviso made running fork jumps which landed them in unison astride a galloping horse.

"No one could match my father's physical skills," said his son Ernesto. "A lot of people tried to copy what he did, but none could do it consistently. He was extremely innovative. He was the kind of person who could never give himself much credit. He never rested on his laurels."

In 1933, the Cristianis went to England for the Great Yarmouth Circus where they were seen by Bertram Mills. He signed the act for the prestigious Christmas date at London's Olympia.

An agent for Ringling-Barnum tried to sign them while they were on Medrano in 1932. Papa Cristiani insisted on being presented as a center ring attraction which killed the offer. While in England a year later Pat Valdo again tried to sign them for Ringling. This time a deal was struck.

When they opened at Madison Square Garden they were shocked to find that they were one of three riding acts working simultaneously. They were in one end ring, the Rieffenachs in the other, and the Loyal-Repenskys in the center ring. A dispute erupted, the result of which was that they were sent to Hagenbeck-Wallace for the road tour where they replaced Poodles Hanneford's riding act which had opened with Hagenbeck at Chicago Stadium. They returned to the Hagenbeck show in 1935.

In 1936 the Ringling management moved them to Al G. Barnes where they remained in 1937. During the winter of 1936-1937 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studio made a Pete Smith short subject of the Cristianis. Lucio was in his prime and all of his famous tricks are documented in this film.

In 1938 John Ringling North brought them back to the Ringling-Barnum show--this time in the center ring. Following the Scranton strike, they went over to the Barnes show with many other top Ringling acts. They stayed on Ringling through the 1942 season when they were paid \$750 per week for their act.







Cristiani, manager of Cristiani Bros. Circus in 1958. Pfening Archives.

In 1943 they were signed for a Broadway production called *Miss Underground*. The show was shorted-lived, and the Cristianis joined Spangles, Ringling's summer Madison Square Garden show. In 1944 they played indoor dates and fairs. In 1945 they were with Art Concello's Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus. From 1946 to 1948 they were with Zack Terrell's Cole Bros. Circus, and in 1949 they toured with Floyd King's King Bros. Circus.

It was with the King show that Lucio moved into management as the company was titled King Bros.-Cristiani in 1952 and 1953. In 1954 the family struck out on its own with a ball park circus called Bailey Bros. and Cristiani. That year it became the first American circus to play Alaska. In 1956, the show began displaying under canvas. Under his and his family's guidance, the show prospered and grew in size each year. The 1958 and 1959 season were particularly profitable.

He continued to perform with the riding act, but due to age he quit the difficult tricks in 1960 and injected comedy into the act. His athletic skills didn't desert him completely as he continued long into middle age to perform leaps over elephants and other aggressive tricks. He had a riding act on brother Pete's Cristiani-Wallace show in the early 1960s and later performed on Beatty-Cole.

In the 1960s he trained a group of leopards, presented by his wife Gilda, that developed into one of the best uncaged acts in the business. It was featured on the Circus of the Stars TV special with Juliet Prowse working the cats as he stood by in a tuxedo. They spot dated this act through 1991.

Cristiani was honored as a Sarasota Circus Celebrity by the Ringling Museum in 1972. In 1989 he and his family were inducted into Sarasota's Circus Ring of Fame.



Lucio and Gilda Cristiani and their sons on Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus in the 1960s. Cliff Glotzbach photo.

He was a multifaceted individual, a successful circus owner, an animal trainer, a great acrobatic tumbler, a gifted clown, a musician, and most importantly the greatest bareback rider in the history of the world. Lucio Cristiani died in Sarasota, Florida on January 22, 1992 at age 82. I was honored to know him.

## A Reckless Era of Aerial Performance

### *The Evolution of Trapeze*

*Just how important is it to be the first to do a thing? How important is it to do the most, to go the highest, the farthest? How important? Some people have died for it."*

Did you ever wonder who first swung from a trapeze? Did you ever wonder when the first aerial somersault was thrown? Did you ever wonder how the complex team aerial performances were developed and who invented them? If you have, you are not alone.

In 1985, circus historian Steve Gossard discovered a conflict. Two different cities in the United States had taken credit for the invention of the particular type of trapeze performance called the *flying return act*. Since then Gossard has been fixated on finding the source of the invention of the flying return act and solving the mystery. He has spent thousands of hours scrolling through 19th century periodicals in tracing the evolution of the various types of trapeze performances.

What he uncovered is more than a historical study. It is an adventure. It is a mystery. It is the story of **A Reckless Era of Aerial Performance**. Share the author's sense of discovery as he traces the evolution of this daring and beautiful art form, and chronicles the exploits of dozens of long-forgotten foolhardy aerial daredevils.

Send check or money order for \$20 (plus \$3 tax and postage) to:  
Steve Gossard, 10 Siesta Ct., Bloomington, IL 61704







Beatty Blue

New Style Tractor

# CLYDE BEATTY-COLE BROTHERS CIRCUS

Limited Edition  
GIFT SET  
Complete with BIG TOP

Banner Line  
Truck #85

Ticket Wagon  
Truck #33

Concession  
Truck #11

Banner Line  
Truck #86

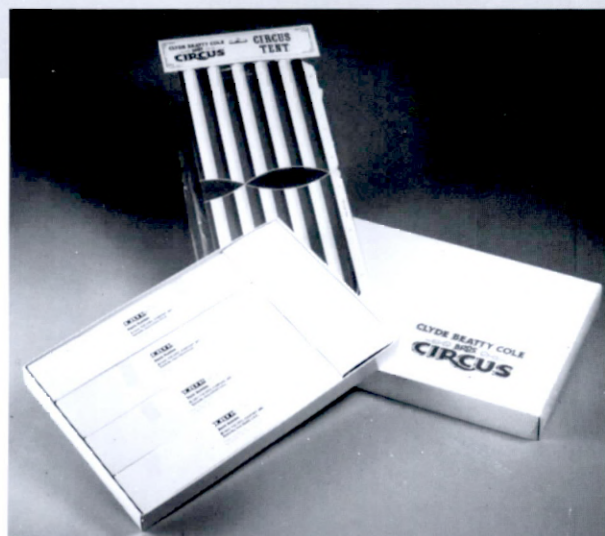
Die-Cut Coated  
Cardboard Tent  
24" L x 12" W x 8½" H

**\$125<sup>00</sup>**  
PER SET  
DELIVERED\*



## Make this 1/64th Scale Set Yours Today

Get your accurately detailed rendition of the popular Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus fleet trucks which are painstakingly patterned from the hand-painted original circus trucks. Each model is detailed with a left and right decal depicting even the position of the doors and windows. These are the first models to be produced of the 1990's Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers fleet. This is the first set produced by Ertl Company featuring the new style cab. An extra effort was made to produce a replica of the Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Big Top. You can use the trailers to funnel the crowds into the Big Top and display the trucks just as the circus actually sets up a real one. Add your own circus animals and have fun! Only 1250 Sets to be produced.



STOCK NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	QTY. ORDERED	TOTAL
1361	Clyde Beatty-Cole Brothers Circus Set	\$125.00* ppd.		
1361-50	Big Top Tent (Individually packaged)	\$12.95* ppd.		
		Iowa Res. Add 5% TAX		
		Foreign Res. Add 15%/unit		
GRAND TOTAL				

\*Shipping prepaid in U.S. only.

SEND ORDERS TO:



P.O. Box 302 • Dyersville, IA 52040  
Phone (319) 875-7444 • FAX (319) 875-2455

Send Check, MO, VISA or MC

☐ MC ☐ Visa Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Card No.: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

SHIP TO: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: (No P.O. Box) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_



(23) CARLEY, PURDY & WRIGHT, 1830-1833

This was a continuation of Charles Wright's New Caravan of Living Animals (18). The name Carley appears only with this show and only in two seasons, 1830 and 1831. Eissenhart Purdy was to join Rufus Welch in the operation of menageries through the years of the Zoological Institute. He was one of the members of the Boston Zoological Association that imported so many animals in the early thirties.

If Wright's purpose in taking on new partners was to increase his collection, then they contributed a pair of panthers, a jaguar, a hyena, an African lion and a kangaroo. More likely, their investment of cash allowed the purchase of these additions.

Wright was the keeper of the lions and entered their cages at each performance, as he had done in 1829. Ponies, monkeys, camels and llamas were also used in ring performances.

The 1830 animal list contained: zebra, Asian lion, Asian lioness, two camels, ape and young hyena, macaw, African lion, two North American panthers, llamas, leopard, jaguar, kangaroo, Dandy Jack.

This menagerie had several unique features in addition to Wright's lion act. It was the first to mention it they used a tent for exhibition; the first to erect seats; and the first to charter a steamboat (it went from Natchez to Cincinnati in the first quarter of 1830). Prior to the use of tents, menageries would set up in stables or barns or tavern yards. Such places were not always deemed a proper environment for women and children, thus the adoption of tents set up on vacant lots had a tendency to increase attendance. No seating was provided in the inn-yard style of exhibition and initially only a few seats (for women) were erected in the tents. Spectators stood around the ring or even on top of the cages, as contemporary iconography illustrates.

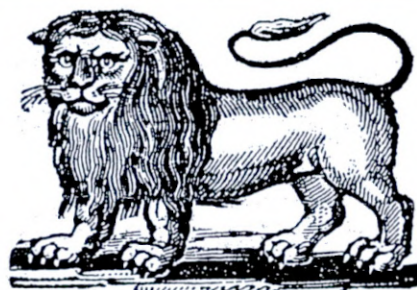
The title of this show was changed to Purdy, Carley & Bailey in 1831, Wright dropping out and Lewis Bailey becoming a partner. They said there were thirty animals in the collection. Additions to the 1830 line-up included a black wolf and a cheetah. The cheetah was one of four that appeared in various menageries that year. During their winter show in Philadelphia from December, 1831 to March, 1832,

## PART TWO A History of the TRAVELING MENAGERIE IN AMERICA BY STUART THAYER

they received an elephant named Caroline, which had landed in the Delaware River in January. We don't know who the keeper of lions was in 1831, but suspect it to be Solomon Bailey, a relative of the new partner.

Charles Wright returned to the firm in 1832, and it was then advertised as Purdy,

This Carley, Purdy & Wright ad appeared in the March 15, 1830 Louisville Public Advertiser. Author's collection.



### MENAGERIE.

THE proprietors of the Menagerie are gratified in expressing their obligations to the citizens of Louisville and its vicinity, for the liberal patronage they have received during the season; and have the pleasure of announcing the arrival of a large and valuable addition to their former Exhibition.

The following, among a variety of other Animals, may be seen, for one week only, one door east of Steelman's Porter House, on Main Street.

The African Lion; Asiatic Lion and Lioness; Kangaroo, from New-Holland; Hyena, from Ethiopia; Zebra, from the Cape of Good Hope; Peruvian Lamas, male and female; Arabian Camels, male and female; Leopard, from Senegal and Jaguar; the Mackaw, of South-America; an Ape, with her Young; Dandy Jack and Ponies.

At 11 A. M. and 4 and 8 o'clock, P. M. each day, the keeper of the Asiatic Lion and Lioness, will enter their respective CAGES!!!

Hours of Exhibition, from 10 A. M. until 9 P. M. Admittance 25 Cents—Children half price. No Ladies admitted, unless accompanied by gentlemen.

march 13

1249ts6

Welch, Finch & Wright, Ed Finch having bought in, obviously.

Rufus Welch (1801?-1856) in his thirty-year career in field show operation managed some of the largest circuses in America, but began his career with menageries, and stayed in that side of the business until the collapse of the Zoological Institute. He was one of a hand full of proprietors who made the change from 50 animal shows to tented circuses. That it took different temperaments and a different kind of judgement to guide these two types of entertainment cannot be doubted. The onus that attached to circuses by the moral leadership of the society, especially in smaller towns, did not apply to the menageries. We think this is the reason so few of the Westchester and Putnam animal exhibitors crossed to the circus when the menageries declined in the early forties.

In Wilmington, Delaware, in April, 1832, they advertised: Asian lion, Asian lioness elephant, two llamas, Bengal tiger, zebra, alpaca, black wolf, two macaws, Arabian camel, crested porcupine, fisher, two ichneumons, two North American panthers.

In 1833, the partners combined with Zebedee Macomber to put out Purdy, Welch & Co. and Purdy, Welch, Macomber & Co., which we detail under (24). Charles Wright apparently became part of the "Co." designation.

(24) RUFUS WELCH, ZEBEDEE MACOMBER and EISENHART PURDY, 1833-1834

The Purdy, Welch, Finch & Wright menagerie of 1832 (23), became Purdy, Welch & Co. in 1833. We believe Zebedee Macomber was a partner in this firm, though, as we mentioned, he was in Africa in 1832. There he was representing the Boston Zoological Association, a group of eight men, including those in our heading. The purpose of the Association was to charter a ship and outfit an expedition to capture or purchase wild animals for display in America. They proved to be so successful at this that they mounted expeditions in the two following years as well.

The Purdy, Welch & Co. caravan of 1833 was a very large one, viz: elephant Caroline, two leopards, lioness, two tigers, hyena, alpaca, African porcupine, two camels, two ichneumons, gazelle, young



lion, two ostriches, zebra, llama, jaguar, polar bear, panther.

The gazelle (family unknown) was the first to be advertised. As large as this menagerie, the one formed in July, 1833, from Macomber's shipment on board the *Triton* was even larger.

They named this new group Purdy, Welch, Macomber and they advertised: Caffrian lion, Caffrian lioness, four zebras, three jackals, quagga, tapir, two leopards, vulture, two hyenas, two ostriches, tamandua, gazelle, black eagle, peacocks, coatimundi, ichneumon, panther, cavy, anaconda, armadillo, marmoset, apes, African porcupine, and baboons.

The tapir was from South America, thus it didn't arrive on the *Triton*. The quagga was the initial representative of the type in this country.

Macomber returned to Africa on the ship *Susan* and was back in Boston with another shipment by May, 1834. This was a group of seventy animals and birds and the entire cargo was listed in a Boston newspaper as being: eland, two leopards, four ostriches, five gnus, seven zebras, gazelle, porcupine, tamandua, Bengal leopard, lioness, two secretary birds, vulture, four quaggas, two jackals, ichneumon, margay, two ibis, birds, crane, fifteen white pelicans, plus a great number of monkeys and minor animals. To these was added Mogul, the elephant Macomber had exhibited in 1831, and two camels. This collection was named Macomber, Welch & Co.'s New Zoological Exhibition. Each partner now had his name on two of the three menageries the partnership owned.

Over the winter of 1834-1835, the cities of Albany, Boston and Philadelphia were each graced by one of these shows. In 1835 all three were part of the Zoological Institute. Macomber went to Africa once more and by the time he returned to Boston in May, 1835, the Zoological Institute menageries were on tour. This time, his shipment was parcelled out to several of these corporation caravans.

#### (25) GRAND CARAVAN OF LIVING ANIMALS (IV), 1830-1834

Claiming to have twenty animals, this menagerie, the proprietors of which are unknown to us, was in Michigan and Ontario in 1830. They had an Asiatic lion, a jaguar, two dromedaries and a Dandy Jack, among others. In Detroit, the license was taken out by Reuben French, who was the manager of several menageries in the years to come.

In late 1831, they listed a "Siam ape," two kangaroos, a hyena and two elephants in their ads, in addition to those we mentioned above.

The elephants would appear to be Co-

lumbus and Timour, one full-grown, the other two years old and three-feet high. With these, this 1831 caravan became the first to exhibit two elephants at the same time.

The presence of Timour may indicate that Zebedee Macomber was involved with this company. It was he who first exhibited the calf we believe was later given the name. However, the animal was said to be two years old when it was imported in December, 1828, and this menagerie advertised him as two years old in 1831. The reader might assume a deception in the notices, but we have not found such to be true as early as this.

Columbus went elsewhere for 1832 and Timour, "the youngest elephant ever imported," was the only pachyderm on the show.

With him were: African lion, ichneumon, hyena, two kangaroos, dromedary, spotted tiger, macaw, armadillo and an "ogotaro from Java," which might have been the previous season's Siam ape.

The company advertised as Circus and Menagerie in 1833, though no circus names or descriptions were included. It may be that Dandy Jack's antics were offered as a "circus." The animals were unchanged. With the addition of a European badger (*Taxa barbara*?) and the deletion of the ogotaro they were same in 1834 as well.

Solely because of their geographical movements, we suspect that this was the same menagerie that we call French, Hobby & Co. in 1834 (41). If that is true, it joined the Zoological Institute in 1835.

#### (26) NEW ENGLAND CARAVAN OF LIVING ANIMALS, 1830-1834

By 1833, this menagerie was owned by a partnership among Thomas Tufts, Hiram E. Waring and E. Waring. We have no proof that they owned it at its beginning in 1830. Nor do we know what animals they owned, as none of their ads in 1830 or 1831 list anything other than a huge horse, some nineteen hands high.

In 1832, we find John Sears as their keeper of lions, but there are still no other animals mentioned. Ned Kendall's band travelled with them. He was the leading artist of his day on the Kent Bugle. Eighteen-thirty-two was the first of many seasons he travelled with field shows.

In February, 1833, a large male elephant, Siam, landed in Boston and was added to the New England Caravan. That

year they listed their collection and it read: elephant Siam, African lion, buffalo, Asian lioness, tiger, mocca, hyena.

Again, the mocca was likely a macaque. Sears entered the den of the African lion, said to weigh 700 pounds. In each town they played they set up a show of wax figures, usually in a hall, for which they charged 12 1/2 cents.

In June, 1833, the title became Boston and New York Menagerie; it may have been then that Tufts and the Warings took over management. By October, Mr. Flint had replaced Sears as the lion trainer. Kendall's band was still

providing the music.

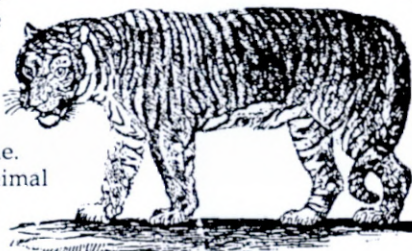
There was an infusion of capital between the 1833 and 1834 seasons as the collection was much increased in the latter year. This lends credence to Tufts and the Warings having bought the firm. The 1834 ads boasted of: elephant Siam, Asian lioness, two jaguars, margay, moco, African lion, Bengal tiger, cheetah, Russian bear, buffalo, African spotted panther, South American panther, North American catamount, apes, monkeys and baboons, tapir, dromedary, llama, ichneumons, Dandy Jack.

We assume the African spotted panther was a leopard, though the serval cannot be ruled out. During the season the caravan was increased by a polar bear, a porcupine, a jackal and a "romper or man-eater." Number (12) in this paper had a "rompo" and it was probably the same animal. Mr. Flint, Ned Kendall and the wax figure exhibit were still part of the show. They had forty-five horses and thirty employees.

In the late fall of 1834, the menagerie went into Baltimore for a winter showing. At this time the title changed to H. and E. Waring & Co. In the spring they were combined with the Raymond & Ogden menagerie to form unit #7 of the Zoological Institute.

#### (27) JUNE, TITUS, ANGEVINE & CO., 1830-1834

This title is one of the best known in the early history of the menagerie and the circus. It existed until 1842 and was, with the Raymond interests, one of the two largest firms of the era. Its voluminous advertising material has survived in some quantity, making its name better known today than are those of its rivals. The importation of the first living rhinoceros into America would seem to be the beginning of the company, though it might well have existed prior to that event. The principals were brothers John J. (1802-1884) and James M. June (1809-1862); Lewis B. Titus (1800?-1870); and Caleb S. Angevine





(1798-1859). The name in our title was not used until 1834.

The rhinoceros, a Great Indian one-horned specimen, was captured in May, 1829, when it was about three months old. It was sent to the Prince of Calcutta in August, 1829, and purchased from him in January, 1830. It arrived in this country in May, 1830.

Such an unusual animal needed no menagerie setting to attract patronage so it was sent on tour with a pair of "mocos" and an ichneumon. It made the rounds of the large eastern cities Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and Baltimore.

Unfortunately for the owners, the uniqueness of their rhinoceros was short-lived. Another of the species arrived in Philadelphia in October, 1830 (28). For the 1831 season, therefore, June, Titus & Co. added the animal to the National Menagerie (19) which they may have purchased at that time.

They titled the show America National Caravan in 1831. It was the first travelling exhibition to use large (6 x 9) posters.

Its animals were: rhinoceros, Bactrian camel, llama, jaguar, tiger, leopard, two panthers, black wolf, macaque, ichneumon, Captain Dick, Dandy Jack.

As the Grand National Menagerie in 1832, the company added two elephants, Romeo and Juliet. Romeo had arrived on the ship of the same name from Calcutta in January, 1832. Juliet was a small elephant already in the country which was renamed for the obvious reason. In that same season, a male zebra, a tigress, a kangaroo and a pair of striped hyenas were acquired. A display of wax figures accompanied the animals, and was usually set up in a hall in whatever town the menagerie played.

They valued their collection at \$200,000 in February, 1833. The rhinoceros accounted for \$20,000 of this figure, the elephant Romeo \$10,000. The two riding monkeys had a value of \$5000 each. At this time the income required to meet daily expenses (the "nut" in show parlance) was \$70. At twenty-five cents admission this meant that 280 patrons allowed them to reach the break-even mark. Two thousand in attendance was not unusual.

In April, 1833, Mr. Roberts, who had been an assistant at the Tower of London for ten years, arrived in America with a tiger which he had trained and became a performer for June, Titus.

At the same time, and perhaps arriving with Roberts, a polar bear, another tiger, a lion and a lioness became part of the collection.

Roberts was attacked by his tiger during the season. One newspaper reported that he was killed. This accident propelled his cage boy, Isaac Van Amburgh, into the spotlight as the replacement. Van Am-

burgh (1808-1865), a native of Fishkill, New York, was to become the leading wild animal trainer of the era.

Eighteen-thirty-four, the final season before the advent of the Zoological Institute, saw June, Titus, Angevine & Co. featuring a fourteen-piece band complete with one of the first bandwagons. They showed in three tents and claimed an audience capacity of 10,000 persons, which sounds inflated. They had sixty animals which were transported in twenty-nine wagons pulled by sixty-four horses. Fifty men were required to operate this largest of American menageries.

#### (28) JAMES RAYMOND, 1830-1834

With the introduction of this name into our history we have reached the ultimate nineteenth-century menagerie impresario. James Raymond (1795-1854) was one of the powers behind the Zoological Institute, perhaps its originator, and the operator of more animal caravans than any other man in American history. At one time, in the 1840's, his control of the genre was so complete that there were no menageries travelling that were not his in some manner.

Raymond owned, leased and rented out animal shows to the extent that in some seasons he had four of them on tour simultaneously. He did not do this alone; over the years such names as Ogden, Weeks, Waring appeared on his shows as partners. He seems to have always had investors in his properties.

Raymond was not an innovator nor the importer of rare animals. Every change, every improvement he made in his operations were the result of someone else's introduction. When heavily carved and gilded bandwagons were introduced in the 1840's, he promptly had two manufactured. When Van Amburgh's fame took him to the acme of success, Raymond found Jacob Driesbach and publicized him into a worthy rival. If his competition had two elephants pulling their bandwagon, Raymond bought four and advertised them heavily.

Our suspicion is that his desire to monopolize the menagerie business led him to the idea of the Zoological Institute, and that when it failed he attempted the same thing privately. His only competitors after the collapse of the corporation were June, Titus, Angevine & Co., who were too wealthy and too well entrenched for him to acquire. When they retired in 1842, Raymond bought their property and from then was the uncontested leader of animal exhibitors.

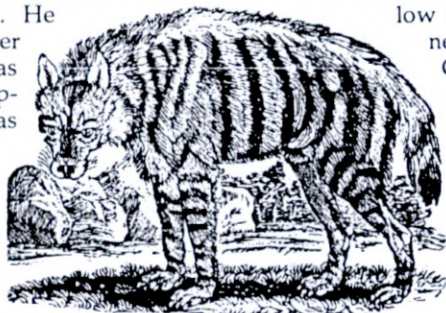
He began his working life as a harness maker in Carmel, New York, and may have been in the animal business as early as 1826. A Doctor Burroughs, of Philadelphia, imported the second live rhinoceros in October, 1830. The animal was auctioned in January, 1831; we believe this marks the beginning of Raymond's management career.

His first partner was Darius Ogden and under the title New and Rare Collection of Living Animals they exhibited the rhinoceros as well as the following: African red lion, black llama, Bengal tiger, white camel, African leopard, lynx of Japan, South American panther, white llama, two ocelots, puma, curious fowls.

During the hours of exhibition music on the Kent Bugle, clarinets and violins was provided. There was also juggling, wire-walking and the antics of a clown. Menagerie owners were attempting in this period to add some life to their otherwise rather static exhibitions. In time, they turned to large brass bands and lion trainers to compete with the ever changing circus arena.

In Ontario, in 1832, a caravan called the Burgess Menagerie either went broke or ceased making its lease payments, which amount to the same thing, and Raymond took it over. He installed a fel-

low Carmelite and harness maker named Chauncey R. Weeks as its manager and changed the name to Raymond, Weeks & Co. Since Raymond & Ogden was still on tour, this gave Raymond two menageries in only his third year



of operation.

Raymond, Weeks & Co's American Menagerie of Wild Beasts had an elephant called Timour (second of the name) which they changed to Hannibal in 1833. The other animals were: two lions, two tigers, three camels, ocelot, South American panther, two llamas, puma, Dandy Jack, and the first serval of record in America. A keeper accompanied the show and appeared in the lion's den at each performance. As was often the case, and for reasons unknown to us, his name was not advertised. It would seem that announcing the names of these assumedly intrepid gentlemen would serve to advantage, but until the advent of Isaac Van Amburgh, they are virtually unknown.

Raymond & Ogden's 1832 collection was almost unchanged from the season before. The rhinoceros was still the feature attraction. They gained a tiger, a puma, an adjutant stork and something



they called "loup cervier." These same animals served in 1833, with the addition of a two-year old elephant named Hyder Ali. The loup cervier had become a wolf by then. A keeper, Mr. Gray, was added as well.

The Raymond, Weeks & Co. lineup was little changed for 1833. They ended their season in New Orleans and the caravan was either sold or leased to Stephen Butler, who toured it in 1834 as the American Menagerie of Wild Beasts (38).

Raymond & Ogden added an ounce or snow leopard in 1834, at least their advertising claimed one. We find this rather unlikely, considering the rarity of these beasts. Otherwise, their group of animals was unchanged. In late season they adopted the title Raymond, Ogden, Waring & Co. This name introduced Hiram Waring, who was to become a long-time partner of Raymond. In 1835, the menagerie became part of the Zoological Institute.

#### (29) ELEPHANT CARAVAN, 1831-1833

The ship *Mary* from Calcutta, landed in Philadelphia in June, 1830, carrying a twenty-three year old female elephant and an eight-month old calf. They were exhibited as a pair in 1830 and then, joined by some other animals, species unknown, formed the Elephant Caravan in 1831. Several menageries in that period had adult and calf elephants which were invariably advertised as "the largest and smallest ever exhibited."

The 1832 notices also shed no light on what the accompanying animals might be. That winter the calf was transferred to Raymond & Ogden (26) and was given the name Hyder Ali. The female, identified only as Great India Elephant during 1833, had at least a young African lion and its keeper for company. Dandy Jack and a host of monkeys was included and may have been the "smaller animals" of previous seasons.

This female elephant went to Hopkins & Co. for the 1834 season (12).

#### (30) HOWE & BIRCHARD'S COLLECTION OF LIVING ANIMALS, 1831-1832.

In section (22) we referred to Macomber and Howe and Birchard as being partners at various times in 1830. Howe and Birchard took the animals to a new menagerie in 1831, which they titled as above. Their ads mentioned: African lion, polar bear, tiger, elephant, hyena, jaguar,

leopard, ichneumon and two "whelp" leopards, the ones Macomber had in 1830. The elephant was the one known as Flora, which had been with June, Titus & Co. (27) in 1830.

This same consist was advertised in 1832, though Howe had dropped out and the caravan was titled Birchard & Co. Menagerie. In 1833, it became Gregory, Crane & Co.

#### (31) OSCAR W. BROWN, 1831

We have found but one advertisement for Brown, that in Lexington, Kentucky, on September 5. He had three young lions, all in one cage, two leopards and a cheetah. He claimed that the cheetah was the first one in America. There were three on exhibit in that year, possibly indicating a hunter's sale of cubs, which were parcelled out once they arrived. In any event, collectively, they were the first to appear here.

In 1832, Brown combined his animals with those of James B. Green to form Brown & Green's Menagerie (21).

#### (32) GRAND CARAVAN OF LIVING WILD BEASTS, 1831

This title graced an advertisement in Rochester, New York during the winter of 1830-1831. No other reference to it has been found. This was one of the most exotic collections we list in these pages, yet we know next to nothing of it.

They exhibited the following: cougar, spotted seal, ostrich, wild turkey, golden eagle, capuchin, cavy, black bear, young buck, lynx, ocelot or margay, two peccaries, cockatoo, parrots,

Mexican crane, ibis, adjutant, crowned heron, turkey buzzard, sea gulls, monkeys.

The description of some of these leave doubts as to their true names. The cavy (cavie) was said to be a Java hare. The wild turkey was said to be a p-whee, a word we can't find. The Mexican crane was described as a grooganaria, which seems to have some connection with the family *grus*. The capuchin was a marmoset in the ad, but these are members of two different families.

#### (33) AMERICAN MENAGERIE, 1832-1833

This collection may be a continuation of (15); the animals in the two menageries are quite similar. However, two seasons intervene without notice of either of them. The American Menagerie had, in

#### American Menagerie,

Opposite the American Theatre, Bowery.



THE Animals of this extensive exhibition will be fed at half past eight o'clock, in the evening. Among this collection are the following: the Rhinoceros, or Unicorn, two Elephants, a male Zebra, two Humped Camels, five Tigers, two Leopards, Kangaroo from New-Holland, a variety of Hyenas, Moco from Nepal-Hills, Cougar from the Rocky Mountains, the Jaguar of Brazil, Black Wolf from Silver Lake, the Cotomondis or Ant-Eater, the Martin or Sable, with a great variety of the Simee or Monkey Tribe, the whole enlivened with the interesting Performances of the Semi-Equestrian Dandy Jack and his Pony. Hours of exhibition from 10 A. M. until 4 P. M. and from 6 until 9 in the evening. Admittance 25 cents.

mar 1

tf

This American Menagerie ad appeared in the March 22, 1832 New York *Traveler*. Pfening Archives.

1832: lion, Missouri bear, puma, female catamount, ounce, male catamount, guinea pigs, zebu, monkeys, South American panther.

As we remarked in (28), the presence of a true ounce is rather unlikely, perhaps it was a leopard. They claimed to have a total of twenty animals. In addition, a cosmorama, a painting on rollers, was offered. This was viewed through a series of fixed glasses.

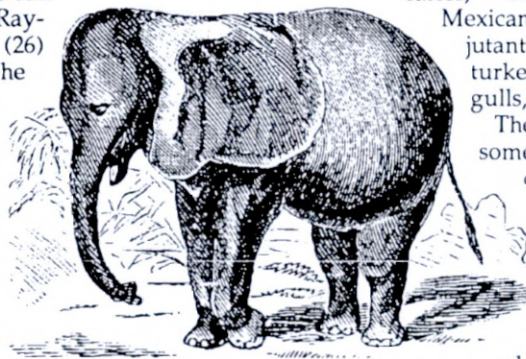
In late 1832, they added a tapir, an ant bear (aardvark?) and a Canada lynx. These probably came from another exhibition, as they said they were "two exhibitions united" after these additions. The tapir was the first to be advertised in eleven years, but may have been a peccary.

The menagerie spent the winter of 1832-1833 at 53 Bowery in New York in a combined showing with J. R. & Wm. Howe, Jr's new collection (35).

Additions in 1833 included a peccary (the tapir of 1832?), an "oriental porcupine," a pair of agouties, a golden eagle and a "man monkey." This last came to them from South Africa and was five feet high. It might have been a gibbon or a chimpanzee.

Several of these animals appear on Purdy, Welch, Macomber & Co. in 1834 as does the title American Menagerie. Whether this indicates the sale of these beasts or not has not been determined.

(34) BAILEY, BROWN & CO., 1832-1833  
J. B. Green and Oscar Brown were part-





ners in 1832 (21). They parted in December of that year and Brown joined with Lewis Bailey to establish Bailey, Brown & Co (sometimes seen as Brown, Bailey & Co.). They were in Baltimore through February, 1833, where they had the elephant Flora with them. She went on tour with Gregory, Crane & Co. in the summer of that year (36). Their collection was built around six lions, the most that had been gathered together to that time. Four of these had been with Brown in 1831, before he joined Green. They were an African, three Asians and two cubs. The male and female Asian lions were performed by Solomon Bailey. Other animals were: jaguar, kangaroo, red alpaca, two ferrets, leopard, female panther, baboon, lama, cheetah, hyena, macaw, ichneumon, two North American "leopards."

It must be assumed that the "North American leopards" were catamounts. Brown's brother, J. Purdy Brown, the circus manager, had a menagerie on the Mississippi in 1832 (14). We believe these animals, less Brown's lions, came from J. Purdy Brown as he gave up the idea of having a menagerie after one year. In 1834, these became the nucleus for J. T. and J. P. Bailey & Co. (40).

(35) J. R. AND WM. HOWE, JR. & CO.'S NEW YORK MENAGERIE, 1832-1834

Formed in New York City in December, 1832, this company was managed by cousins of Epenetus Howe, one of the more active importers of animals. It consisted of: elephant Columbus, two leopards, tiger, hyena, jaguar, margay, albino racoon, monkeys, puma, black wolf, gnu, two North American panthers.

Mr. Whiting, whom we think was the keeper (his name was not in the 1832 ads), entered the leopard's cage each day, the first example of any form of training of that species.

Much enlarged for 1834, this caravan listed: elephant Columbus, striped hyena, tiger, spotted hyena, Bactrian camel, panther, two cheetahs, parrots, ferrets, two ostriches, gnu, java, tiger, zebra, two dromedaries, emu, leopard, jaguar, deer, pelican, African lion, macaws, African lioness, civit, ichneumons, guinea pigs.

Some of these must have come from the 1833 shipment from Africa arranged by the Boston Zoological Association (24). In 1835, the Howe collection was combined with June, Titus, Angevine & Co. to form unit #1 of the Zoological Institute.

(36) GREGORY, CRANE & CO., 1833-1834

J. R. & W. HOWE, JR. & CO'S  
NEW YORK MENAGERIE,

Comprising the most extensive and interesting collection of Living Animals now travelling, will be exhibited in Easton, in the *Spring Garden Square*, on Wednesday and Thursday the 30th and 31st of October instant ~~at~~ **FOR TWO DAYS ONLY.** Hours of exhibition on Wednesday from 1 o'clock to 4 o'clock, P. M. and from 6 o'clock to 9 in the evening; and on Thursday from 9 o'clock to 12 A. M., from 1 o'clock to 4 P. M. and from 6 o'clock until 9 o'clock in the evening.

The Proprietors have the pleasure to announce to the public that in addition to their former Band, they have engaged the services of the Messrs. Dumsday's, late from the concert Band, England. The Band attached to the New-York Menagerie now consists of thirteen members of the most approved musical taste and execution, not equalled by any in this country.

The Band is composed of the following Members.

E. Littlewood, Leader of the Band,  
S. C. Whitlock, 2d Violin,  
Wm. Dumsday, E. Flat Clarinet,  
E. Brooks, B. Clarinet,  
Master James Littlewood, Piccolo Flute,  
D. Dumsday, First Trumpet,  
E. Perkins, Kent Bugle and Flute,

T. J. Marshall, 1st Horn,  
W. Dumsday, Jr. 2d do  
M. Dumsday, 1st Trombone,  
John Littlewood, 2d do  
T. Brum, 3d Trumpet,  
J. Ray, Bass Drum.

The Animals are those of the rarest in the world, and the only of their species have ever been exhibited in America. The proprietors pledge themselves to spare no pains to promote the comfort as well as amusement of visitors. For the better accommodation of Ladies and juvenile branches of families, there will be eligible seats constructed, sufficient to accommodate from 400 to 500 persons.

Among the collection are the following;



MALE ELEPHANT COLUMBUS,

Supposed to be twenty-one years of age, and to weigh nine thousand pounds, nine feet high, with tusks near four feet in length.

This Howes ad appeared in the October 22, 1834 Easton, Pennsylvania *Northampton Whig*. Pfening Archives.

This firm was a continuation of Birchard & Co (30), most likely as a result of its sale to Spencer Gregory (1802-1882) and Gerard Crane (5, 10). The chief attraction of the collection was the elephant Flora, which was first advertised by that name with this company. The other animals were: polar bear, male leopard coatimundi, South American puma, North American panther, tiger, female leopard, ichneumon, albino racoon, camel, guinea pigs.

For the 1834 season they had the services of a lion trainer (again, name unknown) and acquired two hyenas, a black bear, and a male and female ostrich. Their route took them into Washington, D. C. in October of that year and it was in that city that the partnership was dissolved. Gerard Crane joined Edward Eldred's American Circus (39). Spencer Gregory combined the animals with some owned by Samuel and J. H. Washburn and formed Gregory, Washburn & Co. This new me-

nagerie then advertised: elephant Flora, elephant Mogul, polar bear, African lion, two hyenas, black bear, Bengal tiger, male leopard, female leopard, camel, male ostrich, female ostrich, female tiger, Major Downing, North American panther, South American puma.

The elephant Mogul had formerly been known as Timour and is the one we mentioned in (24). The keeper with Gregory, Washburn did an act with the female tiger, thus he was probably not the man who had been with Gregory, Crane & Co. The caravan boasted of having twenty wagons, sixty horses, forty employees and two tents (called pavilions in the usage of the day). In a side pavilion they offered a view of a cosmorama or painting of the world for 12 1/2 cents. This was a picture painted on canvas and mounted on rollers. It was carried in a wagon the sides of which were let down for viewing.

In 1835, Gregory, Washburn & Co. was a unit of the Zoological Institute At the end of that season the title was retired.

(37) MILLER, MEAD & OLMSTEAD  
MENAGERIE, 1833-1834

The ship *Star* from India landed in Philadelphia in early 1833, bearing a full-grown elephant which was eventually given the name Gold Button. John Miller, Abraham Mead and Ira Olmstead formed a menagerie based on this animal. Unfortunately, we have found no advertising that lists anything other than the elephant for 1833.

The title changed to Miller, Mead & Delavan's Grand Menagerie of Living Animals in 1834. This marks the inclusion of William A. Delavan (1804-1873) as a partner. He was a circus man after 1835 and became one of the leading managers of the 1840's. This menagerie was his first essay into management.

Miller, Mead & Delavan advertised: male panther, female panther, African lion, leopard, striped hyena, genet, Captain Bill, Major Jack, alpaca, lioness, cheetah and the elephant, Gold Button. Lemuel Word, the keeper, used the leopard and the female panther in his performance.

In Augusta, Georgia, at year's end, this caravan and that of Gregory, Washburn & Co. gave a combined exhibition. The ads listed a zebra and a quagga, but neither company had claimed such during the season. We must speculate that a third party owned the animals and added them for the Augusta stand.

Miller, Mead & Delavan became part of the Zoological Institute in 1835.

(38) S. BUTLER & CO.'S  
MENAGERIE, 1834



Stephen Butler (b. 1820) entered the menagerie business in 1827 (20), however his name is not seen in connection with any company until this 1834 show. He leased what had been Raymond & Weeks' American Travelling Menagerie in 1833.

This Butler ad appeared in the Lawrenceburg, Indiana *Palladium* on July 5, 1834. Author's collection.

Agrippa Martin (1810-1896) was the keeper for Butler. Martin had begun as a horse trainer for Raymond in 1832. In addition to the African lion that Martin appeared with, the ads listed: elephant Hannibal, male dromedary, llama, two African tigers, female dromedary, serval, two ichneumons, black bear, gray eagle, bald eagle, macaw, monkeys, Dandy Jack, Rocky Mountain panther, puma or South American lioness, Amazon cougar or Brazilian tiger.

The designations for the puma and the Brazilian tiger are examples of the problem mentioned in (11).

In 1835, this menagerie reverted to the Raymond interests and was combined with Miller, Mead & Delavan (37) in the Zoological Institute.

#### (39) CRANE & ELDRED MENAGERIE AND CIRCUS UNITED, 1834

Edward S. Eldred (1811-1850) owned and operated the American Circus in 1834. Beginning his tour in Mobile, Alabama, in January, he worked his way across the South until he reached Baltimore in October. The Gregory, Crane & Co. menagerie (36) had reached the same area at the same time. There then occurred the transfer we alluded to above, in which Crane joined with Eldred while Gregory joined with the Washburn's and two new shows were created.

Gregory seems to have taken most of the animals with him, so we assume Crane profited from one of the large shipments from Africa that arrived in 1833

#### S. BUTLER & CO'S. Menagerie.



THE proprietors most respectfully inform the citizens of Lawrenceburg and vicinity, that they will exhibit their grand collection of Living Animals on Wednesday the 10th of July, from 10 o'clock on. The Managers feel great confidence, in saying that they have the most extensive and choice selection of Wild Animals, ever offered in this country. They have spared no pains in fitting up their establishment, and pledge themselves that it shall be conducted in the most respectable and orderly manner, and every exertion used to render it worthy of public patronage. Among the Animals are the following:

#### The great hunting or War Elephant HANNIBAL.

This Animal is one of the most interesting of his species, being a male of the largest size, with a superb pair of tusks three feet in length, and in beauty form and symmetry of proportion, far exceeds any that has been imported into this country. His performance has never failed to please.

#### A FULL GROWN AFRICAN LION.

At two o'clock each day, the keeper, Mr. Martin, will enter the cage with the Lion. It is very interesting to witness in the course of this scene, the docility and magnanimity of this terror of the desert.

#### A pair of Arabian Camels, Male & Female.

#### THE WHITE LAMB OF PERU SERVAL, OR MOUNTAIN CAT.

From the Burman Empire. This animal is the most beautiful of the cat species, and the only one of the kind in the U.S. A beautiful pair of

#### AFRICAN TIGERS.

#### Puma, or South American Lioness.

#### Cougar, from the banks of the Amazon.

#### Panther, from the Rocky Mountains.

#### A pair of Ichneumons, Mark Bear of Missouri.

#### BALD AND GRAY EAGLES.

#### Macaw Bird, &c. Together with a great variety

of Apes, Monkeys and Baboons. Also Dandy Jack, and Major Jack Downing, on their Shetland Ponies.

Hours of admittance from 10 o'clock P. M. until 4 o'clock P. M. Seats will be erected for the accommodation of 500 persons. A good band of music accompanies the Menagerie.

Admittance 25 cts. Children under 10 years of age, half price.

The above collection will also be exhibited at Trenton on Monday the 14th, at Harrison on Tuesday the 15th.

July 5th, 1834.

and 1834. In addition to Eldred's circus performers, the combined show displayed: elephant Pizarro, zebra, mouflon, monkeys, white-footed antelope, leopard, serpents, jackal birds.

The mouflon was the first to be shown in this country. What the antelope might have been we leave to wiser heads. Of the serpents with the caravan, it was said they included an anaconda, a boa constrictor, an embroidered boa and a diamond snake. They were so gentle, it was alleged, that the most timid lady or child could handle them.

Crane & Eldred went into Philadelphia at season's end and were in the Zoological Institute in 1835.

#### (40) J. T. & J. P. BAILEY & CO.

#### MENAGERIE AND CIRCUS, 1834

Menageries attached to circuses were small, as a rule, usually five or six cages arranged around the outer circumference of the arena. Bailey & Co.,

which was descended from Bailey, Brown & Co. and Green & Bailey of 1833, said they had six teen menagerie wagons, but we would guess they were counting drays as well as cages.

Joseph Todd Bailey (1807-1881) and James Purdy Bailey (1812-1853) were two of the ten children of Hachaliah Bailey, the man we credit for starting all this. Their brother Lewis (1795-1870) had been in the business for some years and we think he owned this menagerie and circus. When it was folded into the Zoological Institute in 1835 it was known as Lewis Bailey & Co.

They said they had many cat animals in their collection; we find reference to a cheetah and three lions. They also had a polar bear and a zebra. Solomon Bailey, a cousin, was the keeper who "will perform the hazardous task of entering the cage each day."

#### (41) REUBEN FRENCH, 1834

We use French's name for this section, though he bought into an existing me-

nagerie, according to surviving correspondence. French (d. 1861) first appears in 1830 in Detroit, where he applied for the license for an unidentified animal exhibit. In 1833, in a letter from John Hart Purdy to Isaac Purdy, in Somers, New York, we find that French rented one-quarter of a menagerie and was interested in buying part of it from F. Quick, and had offered \$1,000. We do not know which of our menageries Quick and Purdy were operating.

Under the title French, Quick & Co, the caravan paid a \$20 license fee in St. Louis in April, 1834. In October, 1834, using the name French, Hobby & Co., they had reached Paris, Tennessee. J. E. M. Hobby was French's partner by this time. This is our first notice of him; he was active with the Raymond interests as late as 1840, French was one of the signers of the Zoological Institute agreement, the charter of the monopoly. In none of our references before 1835 have we any clue to what animals they might have exhibited.

(42)

In January, 1835, in Somers, New York, a gathering of menagerie owners and interested investors took place at which a capital stock company was formed called The Zoological Institute. Its stated purpose was "to more generally diffuse and promote the knowledge of natural history and gratify rational curiosity."

The corporation assets consisted of all the menageries then in existence, sixteen of them, plus cash contributions from both corporate and individual investors. The initial capitalization was \$329,325. Five directors were appointed and they divided the assets into thirteen shows, three of which had circuses attached to them. There were only seven travelling exhibitions in 1835 that were not owned by the Institute, all of them circuses.

The initial season was not a success, and the number of menageries was reduced to seven for 1836. Then, in the next year, the country was gripped by the most devastating economic depression prior to 1929. Called the Panic of 1837, it put paid to the Zoological Institute.<sup>3</sup> From then, the animal exhibition business was in the hands of James Raymond and his rivals, June, Titus, Angevine & Co. Raymond bought the assets of the June interests in 1842 and ruled alone until his death in 1854. At that point the travelling menagerie in America became a matter of but one or two shows each season, a shadow of its onetime dominance of field exhibitions.

#### FOOTNOTE

3. The complete story of the Zoological Institute can be found in Stuart Thayer, *Annals of the American Circus*, Vol. II, 1830-1847 (Seattle, the author, 1986).



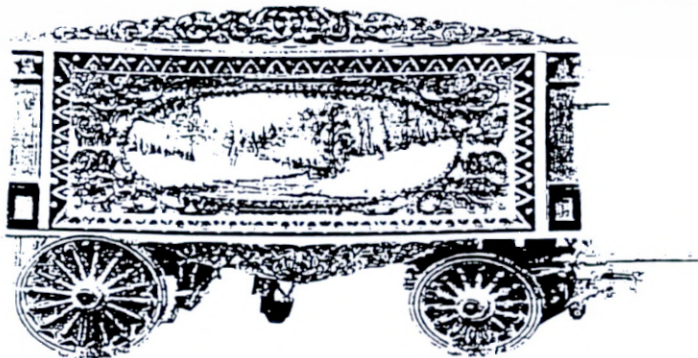
## Gems of the Circus

The Circus has come to town! Now you, too, can own your own parade of full-color circus wagons, clowns, animals and carousel figures of every description - **with all the flash and sparkle of the big shows**. All items are **handcrafted** and are available in magnets, pins, earrings, and tie-tacs, thanks to a new formula that blends the **best** of two worlds! With a new organic compound and plastics we can bring the wonderful world of circus to you, **right in your own home** or to give as a **beautiful gift**. Send for our full-color catalog of over **350 items**; only \$4.00 postpaid, or order from this brochure.

*Handcrafted by the Barbers of Somerset*

AVAILABLE IN MAGNETS & PINS

\$9.95

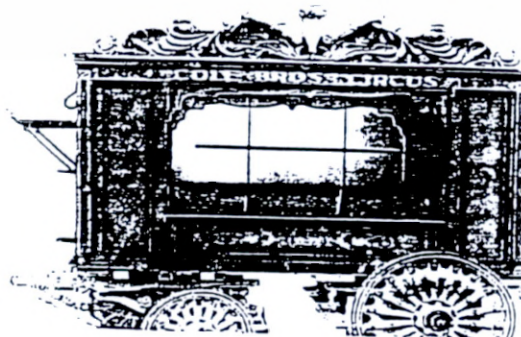


126-M

B & B TAB

226-P

CAGE



127-M

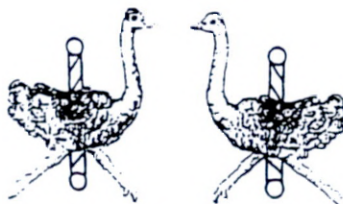
227-P

COLE BROS. INSTRUMENT WAGON

EARRINGS (DANGLE) (CAROUSEL) \$7.45 ea. pr.



403-D



404-D



405-D

EARRINGS (POST)(CAROUSEL) \$6.00 ea, pr,



407-P



408-P



409-P

### Star Circus Supply

3037 Grass Valley Hwy., Auburn, CA 95603

Ship To \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

*Dealer Inquiries on These Items Invited!*

J

Item No.	Quan.	Unit Price	Total Price
Shipping 15% = \$3 min.			
Sales Tax (CA only)			
TOTAL DUE			



*Untamed*, by Gunther Gebel-Williams with Toni Reinhold. (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1991)

After many years of false news bulletins, the long-awaited Gunther Gebel-Williams autobiography has finally arrived. Fifteen years ago, there was talk that Jack Ryan, one-time Ringling publicist in the early Feld years, might co-write this hook.

Ryan was dockside when Gebel-Williams first came to America and was responsible for much of the early Ringling hype for the blond trainer. As both an experienced writer and circus insider, Ryan, perhaps, would have contributed a better feel for the world of the circus than the chosen co-writer, Toni Reinhold, who is billed as an investigative journalist.

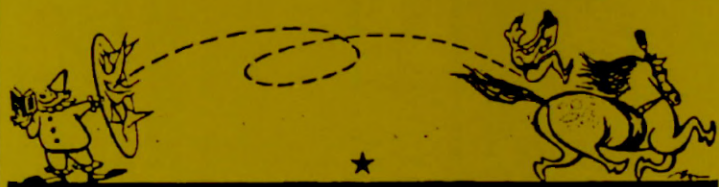
I was eager to receive this book as it's the first major circus autobiography from a nationally-renowned publisher in many years. Not unlike other circus tomes and especially autobiographies by entertainers in general, it's probably what was left out of the book that would ultimately prove to be the more fascinating story. Don't get me wrong. The book is both engaging and entertaining but is lacking around the dramatic edges once you get past the overlong chapters about Gebel-Williams' dreary, early childhood among the Nazis.

Gabel-Williams obviously holds both his parents in low regard and spares no space in telling the reader so. The father was allegedly an alcoholic and the mother, apparently, an uncaring, insensitive woman who should have never had children. The mother's early "abandonment" of him on the lot of Circus Williams is greatly detailed and serves to reinforce intermittent references throughout the book by the authors to the mother's indifference towards Gunther and later his children. Suffice it to say that Gebel-Williams' relationship with his mother was very complicated and apparently quite painful. However, the authors may have gone too far in painting a very ugly picture of the mother, almost reminiscent of *Mommie Dearest*. The book's publicists, in fact, even tout the fact in their press releases that his mother reportedly "beat him with wooden clothes hangers."

As we pick up the story at Circus Williams, where Gebel-Williams began living and working at age 13, we're introduced to circus owners Harry and Carola Williams, and later their daughter Jeanette.

According to the book's advance

## STAR BACK REVIEW



press releases, Gebel-Williams was "sold" to Circus Williams by his mother, who signed him away with a flourish of her signature--and that of his drunken father--on an employment contract. The word "sold"--if he were a slave--is undoubtedly a somewhat sensational word to use and a pretty harsh indictment of one's own mother, no matter how bizarre her behavior. And, while one gathers the obvious impression that the mother was often quite emotionally matter-of-fact, in the mold of a stereotype and strident German personality, it can't be accurately said that Gebel-Williams was "sold" to anyone, since apparently all compensation resulting from the contract went directly to Gebel-Williams. In fact, there is no mention in the book that either the mother or father were paid anything as a

Gunther Gebel-Williams in the 101st edition of the *Greatest Show on Earth*. Ringling-Barnum photo.



result of the contract. If anything, the contract was undoubtedly the best thing that ever happened to this youngster, for it led to the career that now gives birth to the autobiography.

Reading on, we learn that Carola Williams had a son, Holdy, by a prior marriage, who was occasionally affiliated with Circus Williams but later struck out on his own with

an aerial act. Although he's still living, no mention of him has ever before appeared in official William's family biographies.

We also discover the existence of another Williams' child, Manuela, who died as an infant. We also read about the accidental death, as has been documented elsewhere, of Alphons. Harry and Carola's only son who was with the circus only a short time, having spent most of his youth away at school.

An admitted and enthusiastic admirer of the opposite sex "with an eye for beautiful women," Gebel-Williams discusses an early love affair with a Dutch lion act presenter, Tini Berman, who was a Circus Williams feature. Although Gebel-Williams amorous conquests were often grist for lively back stage gossip, few details surface in the book, although benign, superficial references are occasionally made.

Gebel-Williams training as an animal man began, of course, on Circus Williams under Harry Williams' tutelage, following earlier duties in a variety of circus jobs. There is no doubt that Gebel-Williams' personal eagerness opened doors of opportunity at the circus during his early Circus-Williams years. Lucky for him, the Williams family took him under its wing and provided the stage on which his ultimate career as an animal man was launched.

The author credits Williams and later veteran trainers Franz and Adolph Althoff, Carola's brothers, with much of his early animal training knowledge. He talks about the training and formation of his voice-command elephant act, one that was earlier originated, on a smaller scale, he reports, by Franz Althoff in Germany. "He [Franz Althoff] never worked with more than twelve at a time and he still used hand signals and touch." Although Gebel-Williams' later presentation of this style elephant display on the Ringling show was somewhat novel, it never appealed artistically to this writer, who still prefers the more fast-paced, choreographed routines



of the late Hugo Schmitt, Buckles Woodcock, Fred Logan, and Axel Gautier. It was also always an observation that the elephants in Gebel-Williams display were never really left unattended and were often "cued" by nearby handlers, despite publicity about "voice commands alone."

Although Gebel-Williams claims on page 174 of his book that he was the first to combine an elephant and a tiger in an act, this is historically inaccurate for such an act was developed as early as 1920 by the famed American trainer Louis Roth, whose wife also worked an act featuring a tiger and a horse. In referring to his own early experiences training wild animals, which began in the 1960s, he later writes that "the tiger was new to the circus, whereas lions were being trained a thousand years ago." Tigers, in fact, have been a part of the American circus scene since the early 1870s and probably go back even further in Europe.

It's interesting to note that many circus personalities who should have been in the book are missing. There is no mention, for instance, of Allen Bloom, who was in Irvin Feld's constant shadow and remains a major presence with the show, who helped oversee the publicity campaigns that helped further Gebel-Williams' career and concurrently enhance Ringling's coffers. Also missing, Jack Ryan, the first Ringling publicist to work with Gebel-Williams upon his U. S. arrival, and someone who accompanied the performer on many of his early media triumphs. None of the circus managers, such as Tuffy Genders and Bob Dover, who were so much a part of the early Ringling years, are even mentioned in passing. Also absent, with the exception of Charly Baumann, are any references to fellow Ringling trainers, of which there have been many over the 23 years of Gebel-Williams' stateside presence.

Selected "blind references" to known circus personalities, such as Elvin Bale, who later married Jeanette, seem unnecessary. In this instance, for example, it would give the story more credibility and historical accuracy, not to mention readability.

What struck me as interesting were regular writings about money. Apparently, this is a small obsession with the writer who, while he justifiably speaks with a degree of affection for Carola Williams throughout most of the book, says later on that "Carola could have done better by me." He also claims that during the first 10 years here, he was never well-paid, but later corrected the matter. Such retrospective griping is surely permissible in an autobiography, but seems of marginal interest, given the omission of more inter-

esting contemporary fare such as some gripping, "backstage story color," which the story surely lacks.

The Gebel-Williams TV special, which aired nationally in 1977 on CBS-TV and was hosted by film star Tony Curtis, doesn't even warrant a mention, although it was a major event in the trainer's career. No other foreign circus performer has been accorded such exposure on U. S. television and that broadcast was reportedly



Gebel-Williams at the dedication of his plaque in the Sarasota, Florida Ring of Fame in January 1991. Fred Pfening photo.

part of bigger TV plans for Gebel-Williams being plotted at the time by the elder Feld.

Also missing from the pages is any mention of the embarrassing white tiger debacle from the 109th Ringling show in which an untrained baby white tiger was brought out by Gebel-Williams during the show's finale and touted as another "First Time in America" attraction by the show's announcer. The trainer always looked remarkably uncomfortable during this routine and this attraction, which Irvin Feld personally hyped to me as we, in the show's press department, prepared press materials for the 109th edition. It turned out to be a major fizzle. The next year, Vargas featured an entire act of full-grown white tigers, owned by John Cuneo, and later this act, ironically, also appeared on one of the Ringling units.

According to the book, Gebel-Williams is now one of the owners of the Ringling circus, which should come as a great sur-

prise to many in the industry since this matter has never, to my knowledge, previously made it into the public record. What percentage of ownership or what specific role he plays in making corporate decisions is never defined but one must assume, based on past history, that Kenneth Feld has relinquished little authority or control and that Gebel-Williams' ownership is a token one at best.

Much space in the book is understandably dedicated to Gebel-Williams' family and especially his wife, Sigrid. Although professionally she never appeared to have much enthusiasm for performing, and was never more than a presenter in the ring, the author gives her ample credit for his success. He readily admits that without his wife's commitment to the care and feeding of Gunther Gebel-Williams, there wouldn't have been so many acts and successes. Mrs. Gebel-Williams should, no doubt, take a bow for this.

Also included in the byplay is the widely-publicized matter of Gebel-Williams present wife and ex-wife, Jeanette, working together ringside in the early Ringling years. Gebel-Williams himself was a great promoter of this story, so it's no surprise that it resurfaces in the pages of *Untamed*.

Of all the people mentioned in the book who were or are a part of Gebel-Williams' life, Jeanette probably suffers the most editorial grilling, and an arguably unbalanced share of gratuitous reportorial drubbings. This is most unfortunate, since the two have remained close over the ensuing years, despite the expected conflicts one would periodically anticipate among two people who have lived as both brother and sister and husband and wife.

It's also strange that Franz Althoff, Jr., son of Adolph, Carola's brother with whom Gebel-Williams spent considerable time early in his career, only merits a one-time mention in which he's matter-of-factly described as an elephant and horse trainer. Franz had to be around the dinner table during all those meals, which are so generously referenced in the book, that Gebel-Williams allegedly shared with Adolph and family. Similar in age and animal training interests, a friendship would have seemed inevitable, but no mention of this is made. Later, Franz, Jr. and Adolph appeared with a horseback-riding tiger act on the Ringling show about the time of Gunther's U. S. arrival, and in the early 1970s Franz returned to Germany and encored the Circus Williams name, fielding the Althoff-Williams Circus, which still tours today.

Toward the book's end, Gebel-Williams, perhaps a bit full of himself,



says that he promised to give Irvin Feld, "the most sensational animal acts that had ever been seen." This statement, of course, is "sensational" at best since Gebel-Williams, while a good trainer, could never be considered the greatest of his lot, since he neither had the best animal acts nor the biggest animal acts ever presented in America. He had a good tiger act, but showmanship-wise, Charly Baumann's was, in this writer's estimation, more entertaining. The Gebel-Williams leopard act was one in a series of many such acts in the U. S. Fifty years ago, the French trainer Alfred Court, along with some 80 cats, came to the Ringling show and presented a leopard act that included eight showgirls assisting Damoo, a Court trainer, inside the big cage. American born Terrell Jacobs presented as many as 52 cats at once in a single cage, more cats than even Clyde Beatty ever managed together.

Gebel-Williams' success, which was helped along by a major Ringling media push over 21 consecutive years, was a combination of looks, costuming, energy, talent, and promotion. Working together, these factors produced the intended result. While Gebel-Williams would, no doubt, be successful under any circumstances, he would have never enjoyed the professional achievement he enjoys today if it weren't for the comparable marketing talents of Irvin Feld, his stateside mentor. And while Gebel-Williams speaks often and fondly of Feld, one never gets a true insight into Feld's personality and idiosyncrasies. The circus environment itself never really comes alive in this book, and this is so, perhaps, because the co-writer, not readily familiar with the circus turf about which she writes, fails to get under the skin of the circus where so much of its personality really flourishes.

There's no doubt that Gebel-Williams is one of the great circus personalities of the 20th century. He's a terrific showman who easily connects with the audience and he's certainly dedicated his life to the circus animals, displaying a herculean energy level for a great many years. His retirement seems so premature and yet he's been a Ringling headliner for over two decades, a crown shared by few previous Ringling regulars. *Untamed* is certainly a book that should have been written, as Gebel-Williams is deserving of an autobiography. Whether one agrees with the style, substance, and, in some cases, the content of this book is momentarily irrelevant. One must, however, agree that no circus personality, alive or dead, deserves the recognition more. He is, by far, the most famous circus personality of his day, and one of the industry's most versatile performers.

Like any human being, Gebel-Williams

undoubtedly has his shortcomings and flaws, not all of which are, perhaps, fully and truthfully annunciated in this book, but so, too, is the trail of many theatrical autobiographies before him.

Circus pros and buffs alike will want to read this book. I packed it in, cover to cover, on a single airplane trip. This certainly a must addition to any credible circus book collection. Not since Alfred Court's autobiography, *My Life With the Big Cats* in 1955, and Charly Baumann's *Tiger Tiger* in 1975, has there been a circus autobiography released by a major American publisher.

To complete your Gebel-Williams book collection, be sure to obtain a copy of *Lord of the Rings*, a handsome, coffee table-size picture book published for Ringling by a New York vanity press three years ago as a promotional piece in conjunction with Gebel-Williams farewell tour. It contains hundreds of superb color photos from the trainer's 40-year career, and is now available through one of the Ringling retail stores. Jerry Digney

*Digney is the former publicity director for several circuses, including Ringling-Barnum and Circus Vargas.*

## MY VERY SPECIAL FRIENDS



Meet the baseball playing Siamese twins!  
Meet some very strange ladies!  
Learn about the love story between the alligator skin man and the monkey girl!  
Meet the world's fattest entertainers!

In Ward Hall's new book *My Very Unusual Friends* Ward Hall "The King of the Side Shows" has lived and worked with some of the strangest people in the world during his career spanning nearly half a century.

Now Ward has selected 100 of these strange people for inclusion in *My Very Unusual Friends* you will read of the good times and bad, their tragedies and happiness, their romances, families and children. All in a book you won't want to miss. There are over 200 pictures from Ward's personal album, most of which have never before been seen by the public.

For a short time (due to a limited supply) purchasing of the book will also receive a FREE home video of some of these people in action.

For the first time you are invited behind the scenes of the circus side show, where only the participants were allowed, to meet the oddities as they really are.

Order now and you will ALSO RECEIVE FREE a cassette of further reminiscences of life in the side show. Don't wait, these free gifts won't be available for long.

The book, video and cassette are only \$20.00 plus \$2.00 shipping.

ORDER FROM  
WARD HALL

P. O. Box 907, Gibsonton, FL 33534



# CIRCUS LIFE AND ADVENTURE OF ADAM BARDY

Every so often, story books are written that tell of someone who has lived an interesting and adventurous life, and there are times that some local person may come along who has experienced such an adventure in his life's journey. Of local interest is the story of Adam Bardy, who began his "adventure" in 1915, at the age of 8, running away with the great Buffalo Bill Wild West Circus, when the Circus was playing in his home town of Webster, Mass.

This beginning adventure was of very short duration, as Adam met up with gypsy fortune tellers the very next day, and, in their generosity, they gave Adam trolley car fare money, and Adam returned home.

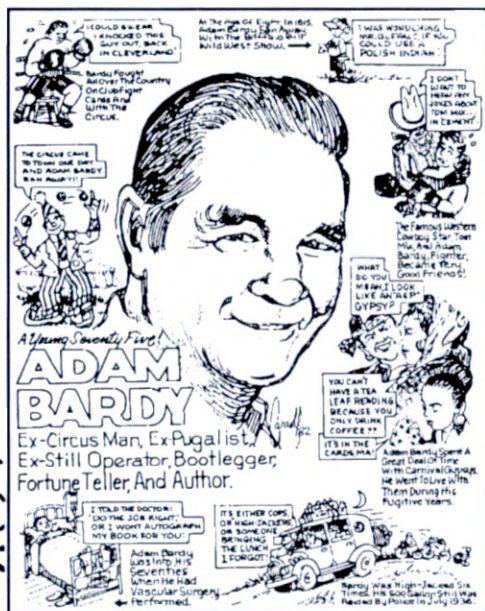
In Adam's teenage years, he lived with woodchoppers in shanties in the woods, and finally in a deserted farmhouse. At the age of 17, Adam joined the Ringling Bros. & Barnum & Bailey Circus. Other large and small circuses were to be Adam's life, until, in 1929, Adam met up with Kentucky Mountaineers, and the life of a bootlegger was to begin. A thrilling adventure as a big-time bootlegger was Adam's lot in life, until the Conn. State Police wiped out the operation. Adam escaped from custody, and a fugitive's existence lasting 7 long years began. During this time, Adam learned all about fortune telling, a life he followed for many years. After that 7 years, Adam gave up and turned himself in to the police. He went on to raising beautiful meat and show rabbits, and became New England's largest rabbit breeder. Then he went back to doing character readings, using palm readings and handwriting analysis by mail.

But, of all Adam's adventures, his memories of circus life were the best, including the opportunity to have had personal mends like the great Tom Mix, who joined the Sells Floto Circus when Adam was with that circus in 1929, and Adam's interest in boxing, which his good friend Tom Mix really loved.

And now, as Adam lives his quiet life out in the country, he has written an interesting book that tells of his 47 years with his wonderful late wife, Ann, who was a devoted and loving mate. The story tells of what it was like to live with a fugitive and bootlegger husband all those years, and then of her passing in 1980. Adam recounts his loneliness for 3 years. Adam continues his story by telling how the palmistry reading of a young 21-year-old girl blossomed into a wonderful friendship of true love and romance, as it can come to one who has lived an adventurous, interesting life. The story explains how, through deep faith in God, Adam could live this strange, unusual and interesting life, so full of excitement, and still remain the happy-go-lucky person he still is. Adam credits all this to the guiding hand of God.

The interesting life story of Adam includes that of his close companion, 22-year-old Terry Lyn Bates. Her story alone is well worth the price of the book, as one can see that age alone is not what counts, but the way we live our lives.

The book includes many pictures that tell the life story of Adam. An autographed copy of "Circus Life and Adventure of Adam Bardy," send check or money order for \$12.95 to:



**ADAM BARDY**

87 Alm Rd.  
Thompson, CT 06277



Evelyn Joyce Cook entered vaudeville in the early 1920s with her father, the legendary cowboy and horse trainer, Jack Joyce, Sr. She joined Ringling-Barnum in the late 1920s as a rider, and married Frank A. Cook, the show's long-time legal adjuster. With him came his ward Franz Taaibosh, better known as Kliko, the African Bushman and veteran side show feature, who lived as a family member with the Cooks during the off-season. Her husband died in 1937 and the Bushman a few years later. In the late 1970s, Mrs. Cook moved back to New York City where she lives today, working on her memoirs and corresponding with her many friends. The following vignette of show life in the mid-1930s is excerpted from her autobiography.

For six months every year, my husband and I rented a penthouse in a hotel near Madison Square Garden. It was home. Big, with huge closets to hang up your clothes, a large double bed that didn't shake, a bathroom with endless hot water and other luxuries we lacked in our stateroom travelling with the Big Show.

For the other six months, while we were on the road, the penthouse was rented by Damon Runyan. It was from here he wrote his Broadway columns and stories and which provided the background for *Guys and Dolls*.

The lobby of the Forest Hotel was filled with a colorful fauna so walking through the lobby with a three-year old child and an African Bushman in tow presented no spectacle.

So, this was home. We were together from the end of the season until the show left Madison Square Garden, and as circus people, it was the closest we would come to normal family life.

One morning at breakfast while wondering why my third cup of coffee hadn't had its usual electrifying effect on me, my husband reached across the table and handed me four one hundred dollar bills. I was wide awake in a flash.

"I want you to buy a knock-out of an evening dress today."

"If you think I'm paying four hundred dollars for an evening gown I may never wear again all season, you're out of your. . ."

"How about black chiffon? You look great in black with your red hair. And get a dress with no back,

# This Little Pig Went Nightclubbing

By Evelyn Joyce Cook

and one of those floating skirts."

"I know what I look good in. It's paying that money for an evening gown!"

When my husband wanted his own way, he always ignored my protests. Frank wasn't the legal light for the Greatest Show on Earth to tolerate opposition, even at home.

"Don't argue---do as I ask. This is a formal party and the woman giving it is worth forty million."

"No one's worth forty million! But go on."

"THIS one is. She's a friend of John Ringling's. She's crazy about the circus, performers, clowns---you know the type."

"I certainly do, and I'm not spending

Evelyn Cook as she appeared in the Tommy Adkins horse number on Ringling-Barnum in the 1930s. Author's collection.



this money for an evening gown I won't wear again this summer."

"You'll wear it again. You'll wear it when we go to Africa after the Ubangis."

"Hmmm. I've always dreamed of floating down the Nile wearing a pith helmet, high boots and black chiffon!"

"You know what I mean. You'll wear it on

the *Ile de France* going over. And it's the Congo, not the Nile."

"Who cares! I'm sick of these silly parties where someone is sure to ask if I'm the snake charmer or the sword swallower," I exclaimed bitterly. "You'd be surprised how uninteresting I am when they learn I ride a dressage horse fully clothed and not in tights!"

"Cheer up. It's the last party before we leave New York. Next week, we'll be in Boston," my good-natured husband leaned to pat my hand. "Louise Launsdale wouldn't be a bad sort if she didn't smoke cigars all the time."

"Oh no! Is she the blonde who sits in the front row of John Ringling's box, with her feet on the rail, smoking cigars?"

"That's the one. Pretty blonde, too."

"Oh fine! She's a pretty blonde who knows who you are. Tell Midas' widow I'm not a sword swallower and I'm not wearing my snake boa tonight."

"By the way," my husband hurried on, ignoring my remarks, "she wants the Bushman, too. Tell him to leave his 'skin' on after tonight's performance."

"I know I'm going to adore this party! The Bushman in his leopard skin, black chiffon for me. Why didn't Madame Launsdale take up trained fleas for a hobby,---or why didn't I?" I was never at my best at seven a.m. Now, at the prospect of leaving our six months' home, I was torn with the usual want-to-go, want-to-stay feeling I had each year.

"Where's the party being given? I asked belatedly, as my husband kissed me goodbye before leaving for his office.

"Launsdale bought the Gay Ninety Club out for the evening. Now, don't forget, buy that dress!"

I found a black chiffon gown cut to the waist in back and with what looked like a hundred yards in the skirt. I floated in it, in fact, I looked as if I was on wheels. The pseudo-French saleswoman in the Madison Avenue shop assured me, "Madame is *tres chic*."

After the evening's performance, I



dressed and admired the new gown, even though the price made me wince.

In the elevator, on our way to the lobby, I cautioned the Bushman. "Now Franz, remember! You are to drink *only* beer, no hard liquor. Understand?"

"Ach forschand, Maw. Ye no tell me," the Bushman muttered, then glared at me with his sparkling black eyes.

"You know it's useless," my husband laughed. "He'll drink everything offered to him."

I felt quite elegant as I drew my evening wrap about me and swept across the lobby on Frank's arm. The Bushman trotted along beside us. I felt elegant, that is, until we reached the hotel entrance.

In front of the hotel, as if waiting for someone, stood Felix Adler, the famous clown, in full "joey" makeup. His silly little red straw hat with its one nodding daisy, was perched atop a garish carrot-colored wig. His freshly laundered and starched white costume billowed out over his concealed blown-up rubber belly and rump. Enormous red shoes protruded beneath his oversized pant legs. In one arm, he carried his small pink and white performing pig. A hand in an oversized glove held the pig's bottle of milk. Around the piglet's neck gleamed a rhinestone collar. Around Felix and the pig, I saw four dwarfs and a midget from the circus, all in clown makeup.

"Oh no!" I exclaimed, when I saw Frank stop.

"Hello, Felix. You fellows going to the party?—he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Cook. Uh . . . we were just wondering . . . are you going?"

"Yes, we're going. And we're late," I broke in before my husband could answer and tugged at his sleeve.

"Well, now, you boys come along with us," he said good-naturedly and turned to call the doorman for a taxi.

"We can't all fit into one cab," I hissed in Frank's ear. "Send them in another cab."

"We'll have plenty of room. You can sit on my lap."

"But where's that pig going to sit?"—I demanded.

With that, a blase New York taxi driver pulled to the curb. He looked at our group without blinking an eye. The dwarfs scrambled into the front seat with the driver. Felix looked at me and asked politely, "May I?" as he gathered his starched costume around him and stepped into the cab, "I hope I won't crowd you." Frank nudged me.

"No, of course not, Felix, we have loads of room." I stepped sharply back on my husband's foot.



Felix Adler and his pig on Ringling-Barnum in the 1940s. Pfening Archives.

Felix settled himself, carefully arranged his costume while holding the pig in one arm. My husband settled himself beside Felix and then pulled me down on his lap. The Bushman pushed in between our legs, half smothered by my voluminous skirt.

The cab lurched forward, careened around a corner, then sped through a red light. The pig began to squeal. Alarmed, I wondered if pigs were prone to carsickness as the cab wove through the traffic.

"Now, be quiet, Camellia," Felix crooned soothingly, running a gloved hand along the piglet's shining back. "I know you're not hungry, you've had your bottle. You're just being naughty—I've spoiled you."

"She's spoiling for a barbecue pit, that's what." I glared at the little porker wriggling in Felix's arms.

"Camellia is a boy," Felix looked at me with reproach. "Maybe I should give him another bottle."

Before I could speak, Felix added, "I always give all my pigs girls' names. Now," he said reflecting, "I've had Cleopatra, Carlotta, Juliet, and . . ."

"No wonder they ended up on a barbecue spit—with those names!"

The cab swung sharply to the left and I swayed precariously toward Felix. Perhaps my Chanel No. 5 had a heady scent, for suddenly the pig squealed, wriggled and scrambled to get in my lap.

"Felix! Keep that stinking pig away from me." I tried to remain calm, even though the tiny pig heaved itself determinedly toward me.

"Camellia is bathed and perfumed every day. He drinks only milk, so he can't possible smell."

"I don't care if that pig is bathed in champagne. It still smells like a pig to me," I protested, and turned to my husband. "This is just the way I've always wanted to arrive at a party. With a pig in my lap!" He nudged me to be quiet.

After looking indignantly at me, Felix took a firmer grasp of his prized possession. The pig squealed and once again lunged in my direction, its four sharp hoofs trying frantically for a foothold, and that foothold was my black chiffoned lap. Suddenly one tiny hoof clawed at my knee and I saw a long rent open down the front of my skirt.

Until then, the Bushman had sat quietly, saying nothing, but at my "Damnation," he looked at me in astonishment and patted my knee. "Mama Cook, ye no get maad now." Frank patted my hand. Neither wanted anything to spoil the evening. I leaned to examine the ragged tear. Before I could say anything, the taxi drew up to the entrance of the Gay Ninety Club.

I was tumbled out of the cab amidst Felix and his pig, the dwarfs, the midget and the Bushman. Before I could collect myself, my husband's arm went around me and pulled me toward our hostess. My *tres chic* gown with the long tear down the front suddenly felt like something I had picked up in a thrift shop. My own diamonds paled before those of the spectacular blonde who stood swaying before us. Her throat, wrists and hands were ablaze with enormous diamonds and pink sapphires. She wore a custom-made dinner suit of pink and white silk crepe with a plunging neckline. Her evening turban was clasped with matching diamond and sapphire pin. Louise Launsdale had Cartier written all over her. She must have forty million, I thought. All she lacked was a fanfare of trumpets, and a painted, bejeweled Indian elephant to ride.

Her husky voice broke in upon my commercial evaluation. She kissed my husband, then turned to me.

"Soooo, this is your wife! Darling! Welcome to my party. She's an intelligent looking girl . . . she really is, you know." She looked at my smiling husband. So did I, and wondered what she had been expecting.

Then she spied the Bushman standing expectantly nearby.

"Ooooooooh," she squealed, "and here's the darling little Cliko in his leopard skin."

She walked unsteadily toward the Bushman, wrapped her jeweled arms



about him, kissed him and pressed his head close. His dark little face nuzzled against the creamy breasts that threatened at any moment to burst from her snug bodice. She hugged Franz affectionately and he, nothing loath, stood leaning quietly against her soft cushioned bosom.

"Don't you think you should tell her that's not Clark Gable she's holding?" I whispered to my husband. "His jungle traits may start showing any moment."

I needn't have worried, for at that moment, our hostess caught sight of Felix and the dwarfs who stood awaiting her greeting. She released the Bushman so suddenly he nearly lost his balance.

"Ooooooooooh! And there's my love, Felix! Feee-lix, I was so afraid you wouldn't get here," she trilled as she stumbled toward the clown.

"Daaaaaarlings," she shrieked, "how wonderful!" She kissed Felix. "Oh, you adorable little thing," she kissed the small protesting pig on the snout, no less warmly. She then kissed each of the dwarfs. By that time, her face was smeared with the clowns' bright-colored makeup.

"Still flattered," I asked, looking at my husband's and the Bushman's expressions. "A fascinating evening so far, don't you agree?" I laughed.

"Be quiet," Frank warned, as our hostess turned to us and on a wave of "Daaaaaarlings," we were swept through the club's entrance and up a flight of stairs to our table. I had no sooner been seated when she took Frank's arm and the Bushman's hand and led them away, motioning Felix and the dwarfs to follow. I found myself at a long table, set aside for performers and the wives of circus officials. We were surrounded by Louise's friends; the women in formal gowns, furs and jewels, the men in evening clothes. They sat looking at us with interest, trying to decide who among us was the bareback rider, the aerialist, the lion tamer. Their audible comments were not flattering.

The waiters came often to inquire if we wished more drinks. Yacopi, the acrobat asked, "You serving supper?" The waiter leaned over the table, leered at us, "Yeah," he said, "but why don't you have some more drinks? It's all free."

Assured that we preferred to eat, "supper" was served. It proved to be a barbecue sandwich, smothered with sauce and served on a paper plate. When Yacopi asked for knives and forks, the waiter answered abruptly, "They're locked up."

"We know how to use them," one of the riders assured him, trying to lighten the embarrassing moment.

"Locked up, folks."

"At least bring us some napkins." And we were given small paper napkins. We



Franz Taaibosh, better known as Cliko the African Bushman, was under the guardianship of Frank and Evelyn Cook. Pfening Archives.

glanced at each other and agreed we'd like to be elsewhere.

It was the performers' custom to scatter to restaurants or their apartments after the night performance. There they relaxed and enjoyed a leisurely late supper. For some, especially aerialists, it was their heartiest meal.

After an hour of trying to make conversation with performers who spent every day of a seven-month season together, I gave up and slipped away to look for my husband and the Bushman. I found Frank surrounded by a group of women, eagerly asking questions about the circus.

"You must appreciate the fact that circus people share many disasters: train wrecks, blow-downs and accidents in their close-knit life. All of this brings them closer together in spirit. We have a hospital car, a doctor, a hairdresser, a barber..."

"Oh, no, I'm not listening to that again," I thought and went to look for the Bushman. He was nowhere to be found. So, I drifted downstairs and through the swinging doors of the old fashioned bar. It was deserted except for the bartender. I ordered a restorative scotch and soda to improve my mood.

"Having a good time?" the bartender asked.

"I guess so. Where are all the entertainers tonight, in their Gay Nineties' costumes?"

"They're off tonight. When Madame Launsdale bought the club for tonight, she said she'd furnish her own entertainers."

Of course, I thought, we're the entertainers.

A few minutes later, a young man entered the bar, sat down beside me and asked, "Having a good time?"

"Um hum," I murmured, when I saw he wasn't really looking for an answer. He was looking for a drink. He shook his head, rubbed his eyes and leaned forward to rest his head in his hands. He ordered a double bourbon, swallowed it in one gulp and ordered a second. Just my luck, I thought, a drunk.

"Louise gives fan-tas-tic parties. Awfully amusing people here tonight." He turned to me and asked, "Don't you think so?" When I didn't answer, he asked, "Aren't you having a jolly evening?"

It took me a moment to realize he thought I was one of "them!" I was not flattered.

"Jolly isn't exactly the word!"

"With her money, she can buy any bloody thing she wants. Freaks, lion tamers, wire-walkers... anything," my companion informed me. A murmured "Yes" served to keep him happy. He then went into an involved story about other fantastic parties given at fantastic places for fantastic people by our Louise. Finally, he turned to ask, "have you noticed anything unusual about those people upstairs?"

Not sure who he meant, I said, "Well, the women carry lorgnettes and wear ermine..."

He gave me a strange look and asked, "What was that?"

"Oh! You mean the circus people. Sorry, what should I have noticed?"

"Someone told me circus people have an unusual odor. They never get rid of it. Interesting, isn't it?" He laughed. "A circus smell. Lions, tigers, elephants. Guess they do have a dis-tinct-tive..."

I wasn't helping him although I couldn't have agreed more. Lions and tigers do indeed have a distinctive odor. Anyone sprayed by one of the big cats can be prepared to bury his clothes.

"Now I'm a deep thinker and I have a theory about..."

I never learned what his theory was, for at that moment, the half doors banged violently opened. The Bushman, in his leopard skin, with his own skin full of everything alcoholic he could pour into it, exploded into the room. Weaving unsteadily, he drew a deep breath and let out his piercing howl, "YOoooooooooooo HOoooooooooooo," which rattled the bottles on the bar and resounded in the low-ceilinged room.

When sober, the Bushman had beauti-



ful manners, but hard liquor caused his civilized exterior to crack and fall away like an old shell and an unpredictable individual emerged.

The second yowl didn't startle me but when I glanced at the bartender and my companion of the last half hour, they were wide-eyed and speechless.

Franz then turned his attention to me. He looked aghast at the long expanse of bare back exposed where my dress was cut away.

"What de hell de matter, Maw. Ye not got nudding on! Dat no is nize, Maw. Ach no lack dat!" Then he shouted, "Ye go home, Mama Cook!" That "Mama Cook" let me know he had remembered his manners and I enjoyed the first laugh of the evening.

"Franz, come here. I want to introduce you." I turned to where my companion had been seated. He had disappeared. I never saw him again. I looked at the bartender and read his thoughts. "And he is not my husband!"

The Bushman had entertained the guests with his imitations and spoken to them in his clicking, explosive tongue. He had eaten nothing and it was time for him to be taken home and put to bed.

It was four o'clock in the morning when the party broke up. There were plans to continue the party at the Launsdale Park Avenue apartment. Mercifully, Frank pleaded a busy day and we said good-night outside the club. Dowagers in ermine and mink were mixed with Felix and the pig, the dwarfs and the Bushman. The last I saw as I pushed a reluctant



Ringling-Barnum Circus legal adjuster Frank A. Cook and his daughter Barbara in 1936. Author's collection.

Franz into the taxi, was the pig, held in the arms of an elegant lavender-haired lady, her patrician face thrown into sharp relief by the garish street lights. Her jewels and the pig's gaudy necklace vied in brilliance. Doubtless as tired and hungry as the performers, the pig squealed and scrambled about, showing the temperament befitting a performing pig far from

his mother's hog-wallow. What matter if, in a few months, he would grow too big to be cute and end up on somebody's barbecue spit? Tonight was his night to dig his tiny feet into soft bosoms, and be kissed by the heiress to forty million dollars.

We drove home through New York's cold, deserted streets, the Bushman's head in my lap. All I could think of was food.

"Let's put the Bushman to bed and go to Child's and eat. I'm starved!"

"At four o'clock in the morning! I have to get up at seven," Frank wearily looked at his watch.

"If you insist on taking me to these silly parties where no one thinks circus people like to eat, you'll have to feed me."

"I go because it's important that the public learns more about the circus and its people. The only way they'll know is to meet performers and officials firsthand."

"Do you think any of those people really care? I scoffed. "I think they just want a new thrill."

"All I know right now is that I'm tired and I'll be glad to get home."

We went upstairs with our half-sleeping Bushman. Our last New York party had ended until the next spring when we would return to Madison Square Garden. I looked at my torn gown and thought, East side, West side, and the block that divides the two is the longest in New York.

## BILL KASISKA'S LETTERHEADS



Leon Washburn was a well known circus and Uncle Tom's Cabin show owner. This 1908 letterhead is printed in red and dark blue.



**P**rof. Gentry announced in a short two-column ad in the Ft. Scott *Daily Monitor*, April 9, that his unrivaled Equine & Canine Paradox would exhibit Friday and Saturday, April 11 and 12, 1890 at Patterson's Opera House. Shows were scheduled for each evening with a children's matinee at 2:30 on Saturday. The ad proclaimed that, "50 Wonderfully Educated and Trained Dogs and Ponies 50 will give one of the Grandest Entertainments Ever Witnessed in America, An Educational Festival, Strictly Moral and First-Class, Admission Children 15 Cents; Adults 25 and 35 Cents."

A handout in the *Monitor*, April 10, proclaimed, "Among the dogs and ponies that Prof. Gentry carries, and that will perform at the opera house to-morrow night and Saturday afternoon, are a pair of East India horses weighing only 240 pounds each. Eight imported Shetland ponies, said to be the handsomest ever brought to this country, and among the dogs are four white Russian dogs that cost the professor \$500 each. Little Barney is the only dog in the world that can turn fifty back somersaults. There are four clown dogs, nine champion leaping dogs and the smallest pony in the world, weighing only eighty pounds."

A street parade was promised for each day, "when everybody can see the beautiful dogs and ponies without cost."

Hutchinson was entertained by Prof. Gentry on April 28 and 29. The Hutchinson *Clipper*, May 5, reported that, "Three of the best houses of the season greeted Prof. Gentry's Equine and Canine Paradox on Monday evening, Tuesday afternoon and night. As it is an established fact, the professor always does just what he agrees to do, and in consequence, we were given a first-class show from beginning to end. His ponies, and two in particular, are exceptionally well trained. An accident happened to one of his clown dogs by which it rendered him quite lame but the brave little fellow did well, nevertheless. The professor travels in his own special car and his business is in a very prosperous condition."

"Dates Ahead

"The following dates ahead are for Prof.

## THE ONLY TRIPLE-HORNED UNICORN

Chapter 6, Part One

# To Delight the Senses and Improve the Mind

By Orin Copple King

Copyright © 1990 Orin Copple King

Gentry's Equine and Canine Paradox:

"Eldorado, Kansas, May 5, 6. Emporia, 7, 8. Topeka, 9, 10. Ottawa, 12, 13. Lawrence, 14, 15. Leavenworth, 16, 17."

Gentry's press agent wrote a review that appeared in the Topeka *Daily Capital* on May 10, covering the opening performance of the night before.

"Crawford's Opera House.

"Prof. Gentry's animal paradox attracted a large crowd to the Crawford last evening. It is about the nicest and most entertaining exhibitions of equine and canine precocity ever witnessed in this city. The ponies have more than the usual

amount of what is flatteringly referred

to as 'horse sense,' and the

dogs are simply wonderful. It is the largest troupe of performing dogs in the world. There are all kinds

of dogs, all colors, all sizes and all breeds. The ease and precision with which the ponies and

dogs execute the orders of their master shows the marvelous insti-

inct of the animal creation

and the remarkable skill of

Prof. Gentry as a trainer. The

feats of jumping are

watched with great interest

and when the greyhound,

Prince, gives his great leap,

the excitement is as intense

as that elicited by a

race between noted horses.

The dog seems to understand

what is expected

of him and accomplishes the feat with evident satisfaction. The clown dog is a vast

improvement on any circus clowns that ever ambled around a sawdust ring,

and possesses more tricks and stage business than a majority of the so-called famous

comedians. Altogether it is a big show and very pleasing for both old and

young. The little folks are already enraptured with the novel entertainment

and insist on going to every performance.

A matinee will be given at the Crawford this afternoon and another exhibition to-night."

A handout on May 3 in the *Kansas Democrat*, Topeka, claimed that "both dogs and ponies seem to have a keen appreciation of anything funny and are constantly playing amusing pranks. During the performance Juliet comes out and takes a seat in the box and carries on a dreadful flirtation with the audience. Major clowns every act and

then comes before the curtain for applause. If no one notices him he walks back very sheepish, but if he gets a hand, as he usually does, he retires in the most graceful manner."

During the Topeka engagement the *Democrat* reported that, "a one-eyed pug dog belonging to Prof. Gentry's pony and dog show was lost from the show while in Topeka."

The May 7 Topeka *State Journal* ran a short interview with the professor.

"Prof. Gentry, Here.

"Prof. Gentry arrived in the city to-day and will exhibit his famous trained dogs and ponies at Crawford's Friday and Saturday evenings. The professor has trained the animals all himself. He is a thorough lover of domestic animals and he thinks almost as much of his animal family as if they were so many people. 'Does a dog reason?,' said Prof. Gentry, repeating the question after the reporter. 'Certainly he does. He has reason almost akin to the human being. If you don't believe it, watch him and see. If the dog could only talk he would be all right. It requires great care and patience to train many of them, but when they once understand what is wanted, they seem to take pleasure in doing their duty. The same may be said of the horse.'

"Prof. Gentry travels in his own private car, which is handsomely built, and elegantly furnished for the convenience of himself and animals."

The appearances of May 9 and 10, 1890, are the earliest known Topeka dates for Prof. Gentry, but in the years ahead the Gentry title appeared in Topeka 16 times, for more exhibitions than any other show in the history of the city.

\*\*\*\*\*

"The admission here will be so small you will not miss it—only ten cents." The April 21 Topeka *State Journal* published a handout concerning Cole's Ten Cent Show, also known as Cole & Sieber's Ten Cent Show, which announced the opening of its 1890 season, Thursday, April 24, through Saturday, May 3, on a lot at





Fourth and Quincy Streets in Topeka.

The Cole show was a Topeka institution owned by George Sieber and, perhaps, J. M. Barry. Barry and Sieber had operated together for several years and in 1890 Barry was identified as manager. The Cole name in the title is a mystery. Nothing can be found in Topeka to point to a specific person named Cole. Only once during the season as reported in the Kansas press is there a reference to a person named Cole. The *Irving Leader*, concerning the exhibitions of May 14, mentioned that "W. L. Cole's circus exhibited at this place Wednesday."

At the end of the season the New York *Clipper* on October 18 reported that, "The W. L. Cole show closed a successful season of twenty-four weeks at Topeka, Kansas., October 4. The show will be greatly enlarged next season."

Nowhere is there any identification of W. L. Cole.

It is the belief of the writer that "Cole" was added to the title in an attempt to confuse the public which had good memories of W. W. Cole's outstanding exhibitions.

On opening day, April 24, the Cole show paraded the streets, according to the *Journal*, "with eleven new red wagons and a band." Performances were given every evening, except Sunday, with five-cent children's matinees on April 26, May 1 and 3.

The show opened in great form drawing an immense crowd. The *Journal* stated that, "Twelve hundred people paid for admission—more than the tent would seat. The performance was a very creditable one and satisfaction to all."

At the close of the Topeka run the show jumped 31 miles for exhibitions at Holton on May 5. It was now Cole's Great 25 Cent Circus, Museum and Menagerie.

The May 8 Holton *Recorder* had some hard things to say about Cole's 25¢ Show: "Cole's Great (?) Circus and Menagerie turned out to be a great humbug."

"On last Monday the largest crowd of people turned out to see the smallest amount of show within the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

"Those churches which prohibit their members going to shows can scarcely sustain charges against those who patronized the alleged circus that visited our city last Monday.

"Cole's Circus and Menagerie street parade was a very tame affair; the show was said to be still tamer, and wild ferocious Bengal animals from the African jungles were the tamest of all!

"The show was said to be still tamer." Did the editor judge sight unseen, or was he smarting over the absence of any newspaper advertising?

The May 3 Whiting *News* carried many

lines of advertising laced through the local news columns. Among the inducements offered were "Free wire ascension;" "Free Street Pageant;" "Free Balloon Ascension." Other advertised features were "Bush, the Gigantic Monarch Mastodon;" "Arabian Athletes and Egyptian Tumblers;" "Performing Dogs, monkeys, Goats, etc." The strangest attraction was

**Wait for the Big Show !**

**COLE'S.**

**GREAT + 25 + CENT**

**CIRCUS, MUSEUM & MENAGERIE!**

—WILL EXHIBIT AT—

**Mt. Hope, Tuesday, Aug. 19**

**AFTERNOON AND EVENING**

NOTE:—Owing to arrangements made by the American Showmen's Pool League, this will be the only big show in this territory this year.

**\$5,000.00 That we Give the Best Circus Performance Ever Seen in the West!**

**25 STAR PERFORMERS! 3 FUNNY CLOWNS!**

A show to talk about and talk about. The greatest. Number of Great Performers ever assembled under canvas. A great holiday of fun and recreation for everyone. We guarantee to all a most enjoyable, happy, novel and artistic entertainment.

**A Temple Towering Giant of the Desert!**

The largest tent that breathes. Earth, Sky Land and sea contribute to our rare collection of Wild and Living Wonders.

**BUSH, The Gigantic Monarch Mastodon,**

will be on exhibition at every performance without extra charge.

**A Grand Free Street Parade.**

Circusmen with the wildest traits of the semi-day. A street parade of glittering splendor with Knight and Warrior. Ladies on prancing horses. Huge cavalcade led by their entire company. Dances and Yams containing wild and ferocious. Blooded horses from Arabia. Scotch and Kentucky smallest Highland ponies. Heads of mules filling the air with melody.

**A FREE EXHIBITION !**

At 1 o'clock. See the petting trip to the clouds.

**2 PERFORMANCES DAILY, Rain or SHINE.**

Shows Open at 1 and 7 p. m. Performance one hour later. Do not let other advertisements mislead you; we never disappoint.

**Admission to Both Circus and Menagerie only 25 Cents.**

Cole ad in the Mt. Hope *Mentor* of August 15, 1890. Kansas State Historical Society.

"Mlle Sebastian, the Japanese juggler and necromancer." Frequent announcement was made of "Cole's Circus in Whiting, May 6, Admission 25 cts."

After the show had come and gone, the *News* reported that, "Cole's Circus materialized in our city according to program. Although it was not quite so extensive as advertised, yet many of the features were good.

"McGinty and the white elephant' caused much merriment in the circus, while the Irish Justice, in the concert, delt out law according to Arkansas ideas. We have witnessed a number of high priced circuses which taken as a whole were much inferior."

It was the first kind word the show had received since leaving Topeka.

Another newspaper which received no advertising was the Denison *Star*. The *Star* cautioned its readers, "If you have been kicking about hard times don't prove yourself a fool and a hypocrite by going to the circus."

Sight unseen the *Star* knew that "Cole's circus is a snide concern, composed of thieves, thugs and ex-convicts and if you are foolish enough to go and get robbed don't say you had no warning."

After show day the *Star* proclaimed, "The circus was a fraud and got no shekels from Denison." The *Star* was so righteous that it did not mention the date of the exhibitions, which was either May 7, or the day following.

Life was hard for Cole's Great 25¢ Shows early in the season due, in part, to hostile press reports. Hostility was encouraged by miserly advertising using only nickel-and-dime-a-line inserts in the news columns, or, and this was more common, no advertising at all. Billboards were erected and posters splashed on walls everywhere, but this did not benefit the printer. In lieu of "shekels" the editor took his pound of flesh.

The Frankfort *Bee* received no advertising for the exhibitions of May 13, but neglect merely sharpened the editor's clairvoyance. The public was warned in advance to "look out for confidence men that will be with the little one horse show that will be here next week.

"The 'jim-crow' show that will be here Tuesday will probably have with it a lot of sharpers. Don't be 'roped in.'

"It is reported that the great menagerie of the show that will be here Tuesday, will consist of a monkey and a parrot.

"A show is advertised for the 13th. It goes by the name of 'Cole's Circus and Menagerie' evidently for the purpose of deceiving people, by trying to make them believe that it is W. W. Cole's great show. It is the general opinion that the show is a snide," the *Bee* commented snidely.

Without any details the *Bee* remarked that, "The usual numbers of sharpers accompanied the little one-horse circus at this place Tuesday.

"The city treasury was replenished about thirty dollars by the show Tuesday-license money." It was the only pleasurable aspect of the editor's day.

The *Irving Leader* paid the show a sort of left-handed compliment concerning the exhibitions of May 14. "W. L. Cole's circus exhibited at this place Wednesday. The show is not very mammoth, but it is as good perhaps, as could be expected for a town so small and the admission price charged. The afternoon show was well attended, but not so the evening entertainment."

At Waterville on May 15 Cole's 25¢ set up on a lot adjoining the school building and the teachers and students were given a holiday. Two special policemen were hired for the day. After the show had come and gone the *Telegraph* reported that the show was "a rather tame affair, but there was a fair attendance. No one was disappointed by the performance, as they expected nothing and got all they expected."

In a "poor me" lament common to small



town printers, the editor of the *Telegraph* sadly remarked, "As usual, we noticed a number of people in town yesterday attending the so-called circus, who never can raise enough money to pay up their back subscription or the grocery bills they are owing in town. We would be \$100 ahead this morning if those owing us had come in and paid up instead of attending the circus (?)."

The May 28 Downs *Chief* commenting on the exhibitions reported that, "Cole's circus, menagerie and grand glittering aggregation, exhibited to a small crowd in this city Wednesday. It is the same old worn out outfit that has traveled over this county for the past eight years, going under a different name each year."

The *Chief* was the first known paper to be honored by the enthusiastic but misguided efforts of Cole's press department. Two handouts appeared May 22, and so grossly misrepresented the show that editors must have blushed with shame.

"Cole's circus which will exhibit in this city next Wednesday, May 28th, has one of the most complete Zoological Institutes ever organized. A veritable Noah's Ark, containing a representative of every animal, bird, reptile and amphibian known to man. Comprising in one Colossal combination the entire special, absolutely original and distinctive features of the mammoth shows.

"Read all the bills of Cole's Circus billed for this place next Wednesday, May 28th, notice every advance announcement, set your houses in readiness, mark its coming, think about it, prepare to see it, tell the old folks, tell everybody, remember its title and don't fail to see the show that everybody who has seen it pronounce it to be the best, yes the very best show on earth. At least one thousand totally new features to be seen in no other show. A host of out door free sights including the most gorgeous spectacular street parade ever beheld, many bands of music, costly, magnificent and glorious."

The most outstanding creature in Cole's menagerie was a "double-humped" camel. It was described as the largest camel ever in America, but not until May 21 do we have a clear indication of its size. A hand-out in the Alton *Western Empire*, heralding the exhibitions of May 30, proclaimed its true enormity.

"Cole's menagerie is the most complete zoological institute ever organized. Come and see the largest Asiatic Camel in America or in captivity, whose lightest tread makes the very earth tremble, and

who is capable of carrying 100 persons on his back at a single load."

After the show had come and gone the *Empire* reported that, "Cole's circus which exhibited here last week, gave a very creditable performance, and all who attended it went away feeling that the show was well worth the price of admission. Some of its features were exceptionally good."

The 100-passenger camel, alone, was well worth the price of admission.

The exhibitions at Stockton on May 31 gathered a few inches of space in the *Rook County Record*, with emphasizes on the menagerie: "Cole's circus has come and gone, and those who wanted to study natural history have had abundant opportunity to gratify their tastes by a contemplation of the double-humped camel, a centenarian member of the ape family and some wonderful specimens of guinea pigs and mouse colored rabbits. These with a couple of black bears and two beasts of the cat family, comprised the 'world's fair' advertised on 100 feet of bill boards in flaming colors. The town was full of people on Saturday and the little circus tent was packed to overflowing.

The exercises were of the usual order with nothing particularly edifying or new. Several hundred dollars have gone out of town and the public is undoubtedly happier for the coming of the circus and its going.



"Albert and Ollie Lee, the renowned aerial artists in their thrilling trapeze specialty, introducing all the leading muscular and catching tricks of the period," according to the Kirwin *Chief* of May 29, "will be with Cole's circus in Kirwin on Monday June 2. Admission 25 cents."

Following circus day the *Chief* had a one sentence report. "The circus was of course a snide but there were not seats enough in the tent for the spectators."

The June 5 Phillipsburg *Dispatch*, reporting the performances of June 3, was of a different opinion. "Cole's circus exhibited her last Tuesday to quite a large crowd. The performance was quite good and the concert above the average circus platform exhibition. All in all it is above the average show that has visited this town."

Newspaper advertising for the Cole show in all of the towns played consisted of scattered two or three line statements in the local news columns until May 30, when the Edmond *Times* ran a two col-

umn ad paid for by the Wray Mercantile Company.

"COLE'S CIRCUS and all his wild animals will be in Edmond THURSDAY JUNE 5, you will all want to come We want you all to visit our store before the Show So hear what we offer that day.

If you buy \$5 worth of goods of us we will give you a ticket to the Circus and Menagerie. If you buy \$10 worth we will pay your rail road fare here--ten miles and under, and give you a ticket to the SHOW.

To the lady bringing in the largest number of eggs on that day we will present her with nice Calico dress

Of the Latest Style  
Come Early and Do Your Trading  
Before the  
GRAND STREET PARADE  
Wray Mercantile Co.  
The Great Post Office Store  
Edmond, Kansas."

The day after the exhibitions the *Times* reported that, "The show folks had a hard time here yesterday. The wind blew a gale all day and it was impossible to put up the tents on the ground selected, so about noon a move was made to the south side of the river where there was some protection."

A "good sized" crowd attended, and the performance in the arena "was very good, some parts being above the average."

For every editor that applauded the show there was another who disapproved. "That circus (June 6) was a humbug and a swindle," according to the Norton *Courier*. "Every such traveling concern should be compelled by law to show everything they advertise. In other words every show should be just what it is represented, and any person or persons misrepresenting should be severely punished."

No printer, when it came to candor, could compete with the editor of the *Republic County Press*, Belleville, speaking of exhibitions of May 21: "We know we have lied about the show that is to be here next week; we know it is nothing but a traveling fake of gamblers, we know it is not worth the price of admission; we know there is no menagerie but a broken down camel, and everybody who goes will be badly sold. Yes we have lied but we were paid for it and we needed the money. All we can say is don't be taken in by it."

A. Hulet's Variety Store at Almena encouraged circus goers coming to town on June 7, to bring their eggs and exchange them for merchandise at the rate of ten cents a dozen. Hulet also offered \$1.00 coats for fifty cents and promised that



"you will have the coat after the show is gone."

Minnear & Company offered a calico dress to the lady bringing in the largest number of eggs on circus day. The winner was Mrs. Black who brought 35 dozen.

The Almena *Plaindealer* claimed that "The aggregation that came to Almena last Saturday was not a circus. It is simply a pretense and an excuse for the gambling sharps that accompany it. It is a snide from beginning to end."

The Long Island *Leader*, reporting the exhibitions of June 9, acknowledged that, "The show took well."

"The big show on Monday," the *Leader* stated, "was fully as good as we expected but not what it was advertised to be. It succeeded in drawing the largest crowd of the season and took out of this dried-out, mortgaged and debt-ridden community about \$300."

Following the Long Island date, Cole's Great 25¢ Circus, Museum and Menagerie invaded Nebraska, and disappeared from the Kansas press until July 10, when the *Stewart Bazoo* proclaimed the coming of the Cole show to Smith Centre, July 22.

Circus day in Smith Centre was covered by one sentence, "The show (?) has come and gone." Were it not for Al Hester we would not know where Cole's 25¢ performed on the 23d. The *Bazoo* reported on July 24, that, "Al Hester attended Cole's circus at Lebanon last Wednesday."

"I'm not in it," according to the Solomon *Sentinel*, "was the proud remark of the lemon, with a scornful glance at the circus lemonade." The Cole show played Solomon July 31.

The *Sentinel* reported, "Cole's great show was very weak in its wild animal department, but the acrobatic, trapeze and like performances were quite entertaining. The circus men were the best behaved of any that have been here for a long time."

In another paragraph the *Sentinel* reported a mystery: "Two of the actors belonging to Cole's show ran away at this place. Why it was necessary for them to run we do not know, unless they were afraid the clown would try and say something funny at their expense."

The Herington *Tribune* took a philosophical view of the exhibitions of August 4: "Probably 500 or 600 people" saw the show and the *Tribune* rated it as "a very fair show for the money." "However," the *Tribune* speculated, what would life be worth without an occasional circus or a cyclone to 'bust' a hole in the monotony."

This writer has experienced both an occasional circus and a cyclone and infinitely prefers the circus.

The Hillsboro *Anzeiger*, speaking of the exhibitions of August 6, ran a story in

German and an English translation presenting a theory not reported by any other publication: "Cole's show arrived in our city Wednesday, but an elephant and the other on the bill's advertised animals were, besides two bears, a camel, a wild cat, a snake and a few other little animals, not to be seen. This was only a part of Cole's big show which is on its way to Topeka. They gave two performances, one in the afternoon and one in the evening. The latter was well attended."

The editor undoubtedly said it better in German.

The editor of the Douglass *Tribune* was a man of great wisdom which he proved before the circus arrived by stating that, "We would not advise any man to sell his cook stove to get money to go to the circus, but there is nothing in the world that gives as much of the wonderful for the money as a good circus and menagerie."

Inadvertently the above quote makes an interesting comment on the status of women in Kansas in 1890. Even the cook stove belonged to the husband.

"There was less fuss and fraud connected with Cole's circus than with any other institution of the kind we ever saw."

Cole's Great 25¢ played Douglass on August 27.

By the time of the performances at Elk City on September 4, the Cole show had been on the road for four months. The Elk City *Enterprise* noted that, "While their show is small, and the men and horses appear almost wore out, yet it is far above the average overland twenty-five cent shows. Some of their acrobatic feats were as good as you see anywhere."

The *Enterprise*, in conclusion, made a strange avian comparison. "As usual the most of their jokes and witticisms are decidedly ancient, and some what resembled a last year's bird's nest, but on the whole it is by far the best overland show that has struck this place in several years."

The editor of the Weir *Journal* had a difficult time with his own cleverness while reviewing circus day, September 16, but in spite of his dazzling wit he accidentally provided some interesting information: "The circus has come and gone. No more will its flaming posters, glaring headlines and display of soiled tinsel attract the curiously inclined and cause the unwary to drop a quarter--perhaps two of them--at least till the next time. To say that the circus was not a success would be untrue, it was a howling success for its management. Over three thousand people gazed on the wonders of the menagerie,

the circus, the hippodrome and hypocrite--who advertised the show. They had one of the largest camels on the face of the earth, which was led by a native Arabian, imported at great expense from the far off region of Mexico, and the biggest liar that ever was seen in any clime, zone or planet.

"They also had two black bears--not old, musty back-number bears, but new ones just caught last season. Their stock of rabbits would have made a hungry fox turn green with envy, while the monkey kept a-monkeying till one small boy found that he was a monkey and that he had teeth. The grand street parade began with a pair of Shetland ponies and ended with a one-horse swill-cart. There was some very meritorious acting in the ring, but that was not in any way to be compared to the skill and art with which the gentlemanly managers extracted the 'ten cents' from the folks for tickets to the 'grand concert.' On the whole the show was as much as

one could expect for twenty-five cents, and many of our citizens went home cussing themselves for going, and will probably not visit one again--till the next time."

The last stand of the season was made at St. Marys on October 3. The St. Marys *Star* received no advertising money and was therefore liberal in its condemnation of Cole's Great Twenty-Five Show. It was not a ten-cent circus that came to St. Marys, but the *Star* chose to claim that it was.

"Give the ten cent circus the go-by."

"Don't blow yourself in on a snide circus."

"Don't patronize every little 10 cent circus that comes along."

"The circus tomorrow is a Topeka concern, and is made of a tent, an elephant and big colored flags and banners."

The *Star* did not restrict itself to Cole's show but proclaimed, "Barnum's circus, the biggest humbug on earth, shows in Topeka Saturday October 4th." Barnum also failed to advertise in the *Star*.

On October 9, the *Star* self-righteously reported that, "The circus was a miserable snide affair, and many wished they had taken our advise (sic) and not patronized it."

The 28 miles from St. Marys to Topeka was covered on Saturday, October 4, and the Topeka *State Journal* reported that once again the show was "quartered in the old livery barn on West B Street. The old spotted horse and the camel are still part of the show."

The season of 1890 had been the best year in the history of the Sieber and Barry shows. Despite the fact that in eleven of the 45 known stands the show was described as "snide," business was good.





Twenty-five editors commented on the attendance with only one rating the were designated as "good" and four as only "fair." Fifteen of the editors claimed attendance was large. No blown dates have been discovered.

The quality of the performance was generally labeled "good," and on occasion, "surprisingly good" and even "excellent."

The show came home with money in the wagon.

The May 3 New York *Clipper* reported that, "Prof. Harry Streif, the aeronaut, and Will Stewart will go with the Jas. T. Johnson & Co's Circus this season, under the management of C. G. Eddy, of Quincy (Illinois)."

The *Clipper* gave the dare-devil's name as "Streif" but all of the handouts and advertisements used by Johnson spelled the name "Streif." Regardless of the name, the aeronaut received the most comment from the local papers and the lion's share of the compliments after the show had come and gone.

Ad in the Sedan *Times-Journal* on May 16, 1890. Kansas State Historical Society.

J. T. Johnson's Circus and Combined Shows began the season of 1890 in Arkansas City on May 10. The Sunday edition of the *Republican Traveler* carried the following: "Johnson's circus opened yesterday and had a big audience. Owing to the high wind the balloon ascension was postponed until after the circus performance was over. About 4:30 the filling commenced, and about 6 o'clock the balloon was cut loose, and up she went with Prof. Streif. The ascension was a beautiful one, the balloon soaring heavenward like a great white bird. When about 2,000 feet high Prof. Streif made his leap, and for a considerable distance he shot downward very rapidly. As the parachute filled with air his descent become more gradual and he finally alighted in Gooch's park, west of the canal. The dome of the balloon

came down three miles southwest of the city. Prof. Streif was uninjured. His ascension yesterday proved conclusively that the professor was no fakir in his line of business."

The May 24 New York *Clipper* had a more exciting account of the first ascension: "J. T. Johnson's New Circus gave its initial performance at Arkansas City, Kansas on May 10. The entertainment was one of more than ordinary merit, and a large crowd is said to have been in attendance. Prof. Streif, who arose to an altitude of some 3,000 ft. and landed from his parachute in the Indian Nation, some twelve miles south, was warmly welcomed by the Cherokees and unavoidable wire fences, the former quite appreciative and pleasant, and the latter tearing some twelve holes in the soft floater."

News of the Johnson show after the opening is scarce and only a few dates have been discovered. The Cedar Vale *Commercial* touting the exhibitions of May 19, ran a handout purported to be a quote from the Arkansas City *Daily Dispatch*: "At 6:30 the air ship was tugging restlessly ready to be turned loose from her moorings and very soon it was released amid the shouts of 5000 people and 'music by the band.' It was a beautiful sight. The balloon sailed majestically aloft with the aeronaut suspended from its ropes, and the crowd felt as if they were repaid for waiting even if it never came down. But it did come down. At the height of about 2,000 feet Harry cut the ropes which held himself and his parachute and down they came together. The aeronaut descended with as much grace and ease as he had ascended and the spectators gave another shout when they saw him near enough to the ground to assure them of his landing in safety. The ballast not being heavy enough to turn the balloon over, as it was intended, it went on up and across the country and landed about six miles southwest of town on the state line,

about a half-hour later. It was torn some by coming in contact with a wire fence. The verdict is that Harry is a success as a balloonist."

Following circus day the *Commercial* commented that, "The balloon ascension on Monday was highly appreciated by a

large number of spectators but the show was snide."

The handout in the Cedar Vale *Commercial* reported that 5,000 people had watched the first ascension at Arkansas City, but by the time the story had moved down the street to the Cedar Vale *Star* the audience had multiplied mightily.

The handout in the *Star* claimed, "Over 15,000 people witnessed the great balloon ascension and circus at Arkansas City on the 10th inst. This show is within the canvas and not on walls and printing. Do not miss the event of your life. Go early."

Despite the large crowd that watched the balloon ascension at Cedar Vale, "the circus didn't take away much of the good money of our citizens," according to the *Star*. "Among the reasons for poor attendance at Cedar Vale was the coming of Fulford & Company's United Monster Shows on May 28. Another reason might have been the reputation of James T. Johnson who played Cedar Vale in previous seasons."

The Sedan *Times-Journal* touting the exhibitions of May 20, carried a one-column ad for the Johnson show headed with "IT'S GOT TO COME!" and two handouts, one for Johnson and the other for Fulford with Fulford positioned directly above Johnson.

The Sedan *Graphic* commented on circus day that, "Johnson's show appears to be a small affair, but few people in town. Everybody seems to be waiting for Fulford's menagerie next Monday."

"Johnson's circus was here Tuesday. Except the balloon ascension and parachute act," in the opinion of the *Times-Journal*, "the whole thing was a fraud and a failure. The performance under the canvas did not contain a single redeeming feature. The music was execrable and the tumbling mediocre and that's all there was of the show. The people of Sedan tumbled to the thing and nearly everybody saved his money."

On May 16 the Elk City *Enterprise* announced to the world: "J. T. JOHNSON'S GREAT SHOW!"

"And now comes on the first of the first of the season, the great J. T. Johnson circus, and will exhibit in the city of Elk City on Wednesday, May 21. Mr. Johnson is a well known circus man in our state and always brings a good show. The introduction to this great show will be a mammoth balloon ascension under the direction of Prof. Harry Strif, [sic], who will ascend to the altitude of three miles and cutting loose from the balloon return to the earth. The performance in the canvas is said to be great. The price will be 25 cents. Bring all the little people at 15 cents."

During the evening performance, according to the *Enterprise*, "one of the ac-

**IT'S GOT TO COME!**



**SEDAN!**

**ONE DAY!**

**Tuesday, May 20.**

**J. T. Johnson's**

**CIRCUS**

**AND COMBINED SHOWS!**

**Greater, Better than Ever.**



tors drank a quantity of gasoline thinking it water. The doctor found him pretty sick, but soon relieved him."

The *Enterprise* had a question after the show had gone: "What shall we say about the circus? It wasn't a P. T. Barnum exhibition, nor quite as 'great' as the advance agent's effusive remarks and show bills would indicate, but that, of course, was understood, and as everything was conducted in a respectable manner, the people were inclined to be charitable. The balloon ascension did not take place until late, and as it was fast becoming dark the air ship did not ascend to any great height before the balloonist cut loose and shot earthward, landing safely a short distance from the canvas. As to the show inside the tent, it was the same old story with several chapters left out."

Possibly the most satisfied people in Elk City on circus day belonged to the Women's Relief Corps.

"Fortune was kind to the Relief Corps," the *Enterprise* reported, "a circus happening in town the day their ice cream and strawberry feast was given and it was also intensely hot. The name of the affair was tempting to the hot and weary people, and they poured in and partook of the cool and welcome ice cream and the delicious strawberries. The receipts amounted to about \$20."

Johnson came to Mound City on June 3, six days ahead of Fulford & Company. The Mound City *Linn County Clarion* covered the occasion with two sentences. "Johnson's circus gave two exhibitions here last Tuesday. The general appearance of the outfit was rather 'rocky' but those who attended the show say it was very good."

Johnson disappeared from the Kansas press following the exhibitions at Mound City, probably moving the nine miles to Missouri.

\*\*\*\*\*

Little is known of Lemen Brothers' Railroad Shows & Menagerie, season of 1890. On May 14, the show played Paola. Both the *Miami Republican* and the *Western Spirit* carried short two-column ads for the Paola date, each illustrated by engravings. The *Republican* showed four "waltzing" elephants. The *Spirit* featured some exceedingly active leapers and acrobats. Both papers announced "Admission 25 and 50 Cents."

The *Republican* thought that, "Lemen's circus, which exhibited in Paola Wednesday, though not extensive had some excellent features and was a good show throughout."

The *Western Spirit* expressed the belief that, "Lemen Bros. show on Wednesday was very good for a ten and twenty cent show," a statement that contradicted the advertised price. Possibly the *Spirit* meant that the show was no better than one would see at a ten and twenty cent circus.

Unlike the *Republican* the *Western Spirit* had sane additional news concerning cir-

## THE ONLY BIG SHOW COMING. LEMEN BROTHERS COLOSSAL RAILROAD SHOW

Circus, Museum and Menagerie in Union with Prof. Morrison's  
International Horse Fair and Trained animal Exposition.



WILL EXHIBIT AT CHETOPA THURSDAY, AUGUST 21ST.  
ADMISSION 15 and 25 Cents.

Ad in the Chetopa *Advance* August 15, 1890. Kansas State Historical Society.

cus day: "Lizzie Robinson and Minnie Payne got in a scrap at the show last Wednesday evening and Assistant Marshal Harris arrested them. They were dressed down in police court Thursday morning and fined \$12.50 each, including costs."

Justice in 1890 was swift and sure.

"The circus parade last Wednesday was delayed till 1 o'clock P. M. for John Burrell to shoe the elephant. It requires an experienced blacksmith to do such work."

Osage Mission, present day St. Paul, saw Lemen Bros. Monster Railroad Show on August 20. Illustrated in the two-column ad was the "Phenomenal Feats of Ceiling Walking."

Lemen Bros. Monster Railroad Show was now "In Mighty Perpetual Union with SCHILLER'S ROYAL GERMAN MENAGERIE and PROF. MORRISON'S TRAINED ANIMAL EXHIBITION; Two of the Leading Shows of the Universe, will Exhibit on the same day and date."

In a fit of fair warning the ad also informed the public that, "Owing to arrangements entered into by the 'United Brotherhood of Showmen,' this will positively be the only BIG Show that will visit Osage Mission this year."

Of greater interest was the statement that, "One Cheap Ticket Admits to all. Children 15 cts. Adults 25 cts."

Lemen Brothers played Chetopa, August 21. The only comment of the Chetopa *Democrat* was, "The show brought a big crowd to town."

\*\*\*\*\*

### "SELLS BROTHERS'

Real Roman Hippodrome, Triple Circus,  
Two Elevated Stages and  
Five-Continent Menagerie  
Permanently United With  
S. H. BARRETT'S  
International World's Fair.  
Metropolitan Museum,  
Zoological Institute,  
Racing Carnival and  
Great Golden Menagerie  
Will Exhibit in  
Pittsburg,  
FRIDAY, MAY 30, 1890."

"The Two Leading Shows of the Nation," with at least two of everything announced its coming to Kansas on May 3, in an advertisement in the Pittsburg *Smelter*.

It was, of course, "The Towering Mastodon of Tented Shows. Reigning by right of Eminence; by right of Superiority; and by Popular Will the Exalted Rulers of the Amusement Realm."

They failed to include "Divine Right."

The Sells brothers claimed to have "The only Show in America having anything new to offer," but a careful comparison of 1889 features and those of 1890 belie the claim.

The season of 1889 featured "A flock of Ostriches; a genuine Bun Yip or Devil Horse, from Corea; a pair of Midget Samoan Cattle, 4 years old, 24 inches high, and weighing but Ninety Pounds; Pair of full grown giant living Hippopotamuses;" in the parade was "The Children's Dream of Fairyland."

Feature after feature advertised in 1890 was on the show the year before. The only new feature was the statement that Sells-Barrett was the only show in America having anything new to offer. Nit-picking aside, the aggregation was an exhibition well worth seeing and the public crowded the tents.

May 1890, was a busy month for Pittsburg. Coming May 10 was Wallace & Company; May 13, French's Railroad Shows; May 30, Sells and Barrett.

In a second advertisement on a different page in the *Smelter*, May 3, Sells-Barrett published ten reasons for waiting.

"Why You Should Wait:

"1. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett's united shows exhibit a flock of ostriches. No other show does.

"2. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett exhibit a pair of giant blood sweating Hippopotamuses. No other show does.

"3. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett exhibit a genuine Roman Hippodrome in



a canvas large enough to hide twenty common shows.

"4. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett have the only Living Bun Yip or Devil Horse whose skin is as black as ebony and as smooth as satin, and absolutely hairless. No other show ever owned one.

"5. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett exhibit a pair of Samoan Midget Cattle weighing but 90 pounds. They are four years old, and only 34 inches high. No other show has.

"6. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett have the only complete menagerie, 3 ring circus, two elevated stages and real Roman Hippodrome that will visit here this season. Other shows are small petty affairs in comparison.

"7. Because Sells Brothers and Barrett have for 19 years been recognized as the two leading shows of the country, and when exhibiting separately were considered to be superior to all other shows, but now since they have consolidated they have left all others out of sight.

"8. Because Sells brothers and Barrett co-operate with the authorities in bringing to justice the swindling gamblers, three card monte men, bunko steerers, short change thieves and skin game—sure thing—gamblers, offering a reward for their apprehension and making it uncomfortable for them in every way possible. Other shows stand in with this class of people, offer them protection, carry them on their cars, conceal them when pursued by the officers, encourage them in their disreputable business, divide with them their ill-gotten gains and run their show for the profit arising from this business, and not from the legitimate returns from visitors. This is a pointer to the officers.

"9. Sells Brothers and Barrett are well-known as managers and owners of the two largest shows, attract the largest crowds, and run their combined shows on business principles, employ the best artists, tolerate nothing but upright methods. Their tents teem with the rarest wonders and their show from center to circumference is clean, pure, moral and patronized by the best people everywhere.

"10. Sells Brothers and Barrett will bring the best show in point of merit as well as magnitude that ever spread canvas in this country. It will exhibit every advertised feature. It will be conducted on higher principles and will please the people better than every show that ever planted stakes in this state. No other show advertised here now or that will

come later in the season can compare with it, therefore it is only the part of prudence and common sense to wait for it."

The Bun Yip, or Devil Horse of Corea, described in the advertisement as an animal "whose skin is as black as ebony and as smooth as satin, and absolutely hairless," is a mystery and defies positive identification in 1890 Kansas, or later. The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes Bun Yip as an "Aboriginal name of a fabulous monster inhabiting the rushy swamps and lagoons in the interior of Australia.

"When a black fellow disappears it is generally understood that the Bunyip has got hold of him."



Sells & Barrett lithograph of the Bun Yip horse. Pfening Archives.

In Sydney it is a "synonym for imposter, pretender, humbug and the like," and this Sells-Barrett undoubtedly had.

Advertising car No. 2, commanded by C. W. Ransier, arrived in Pittsburg on the 23d. An interview in the *Smelter* kept alive the myth that Sells-Barrett "is a Kansas institution; that is, its owners are Kansas people. The home of the Sells Bros. is Topeka." One of the brothers, Allen, resided in Topeka, but he no longer owned a piece of the show. Lewis and Peter Sells both had thousands of dollars invested in Topeka real estate, but both had homes in Columbus, Ohio, where the circus wintered.

The interviewer continued his story with a description of the advertising car. "The advance car is nicely divided. The engine is in the front end where the paste is made, and the office is in the center where Mr. Ransier sits surrounded by the pictures of friends, and acquaintances and actors. The rear end is well stored with posters and lithographs. Above the poster cupboards are berths like a sleeping car where the men sleep. The company take their meals at hotels."

After the show had come and gone, the *Smelter* ran a review which was probably the work of a press agent.

#### THE CIRCUS.

"Sells Bros. and Barrett's big show received a perfect ovation yesterday afternoon, and deserved it too. This combination stretches an immense piece of canvas, in fact their tent is as large as that of any of the 'mastodon' shows on the road, and its full capacity was taxed to hold the patrons of the circus yesterday. More than 10,000 people found seats and standing room during the performance. It was the largest congregation of people ever gathered in Pittsburg or its vicinity to witness

a public entertainment. Ten thousand people will populate a town nearly as large as Pittsburg, yet that number of persons witnessed and applauded yesterday afternoon's exhibition of Sells Bros. and Barrett's show.

"The street parade was interesting from start to finish. There was not a single dull feature in it and in its entirety it surpassed anything of the kind ever seen here. The pageant was frequently applauded by the throngs who scrutinized it from every point of vantage along its route. It presaged a splendid ring performance and proved an honest prophet."

Another story, not written by a circus press agent, appeared in the *Smelter* following circus day. The story is especially interesting considering the official population of Pittsburg was 2,605.

"Pittsburg merchants realized yesterday in a very practical way the extent of the retail trade it is possible for them to grasp and hold and visitors to the city were simply astonished at the crowds that thronged the sidewalks and the great number of vehicles that choked up and made for a time, almost impassable the chief avenues of local travel. It is safe to put the population of Pittsburg for the ten hours of yesterday at 15,000 people and this congregation of expectant citizens and visitors were on the streets and in the stores, restless, busy and jostling a gig, and take it for all and all, a good humored crowd."

Sells-Barrett played Paola, June 6; Ottawa, June 7; Kansas City, June 9; Leavenworth, June 10; and Atchison, June 11. Wherever the show exhibited the parade and performance were praised in the local press.

The Paola *Miami Republican* claimed that, "The Sells and Barrett show in Paola last Friday was the best circus and menagerie that ever exhibited in Paola.



These gentlemen are first class, square business men, who do everything advertised and treat the public well."

A report in the *Ottawa Republican* presented something of a mystery.

"The side show of the circus on Saturday evening was the most attractive spot for many of our bachelors and widowers. There was a beautiful specimen of the gentler sex selling her photographs, which seemed to be going like hot cakes. Friend Beachy seemed to be a great favorite of hers. So was Percy Moise apparently, for she asked interested spectators who were feasting on her charms, that she would like to see a spry, good-looking young gentleman, rather dudishly dressed by the name of Percy Moise, who had made a favorable impression on her young heart."

It was not uncommon for performers to use local names to spice up their remarks, but the big question in this instance is, what kind of an act was the beautiful young woman presenting?

Sells-Barrett was the defendant in a trial at Leavenworth called for June 3. The *Leavenworth Times* carried the following story on June 4: "The famous case of Miss Van Zandt against Sells Bros' circus was called for trial yesterday. This is a case where Miss Van Zandt was employed by Sells Bros. as a trapeze performer. A contract was drawn up and Miss Van Zandt was employed for a certain length of time at a certain stipulated salary. She had only been with them a short time when they discharged her on the grounds that she did not fill the contract. Miss Van Zandt's home is in this city. L. B. Wheat is attorney for the plaintiff and Lucien Baker is attorney for the defendants."

"Mr. Wheat objected to having the case tried at that time on the grounds that an important paper in the case had been lost. The case was continued and will come up for trial to-morrow."

Before the trial began on the 5th a more urgent case required immediate attention and Van Zandt vs Sells-Barrett was postponed until the following day. Two of the Sells brothers, probably Lewis and Peter, and also S. H. Barrett, were on hand.

The Van Zandt trial occurred on June 7, but the *Times* failed to report the disposition until the 11th. Miss Van Zandt considered herself injured to the extent of \$1,000, but the court had a different opinion. The matter was concluded on circus day, according to the *Times*.

"It will be remembered that a few days ago the United States court adjudged Millie Van Zandt the sum of \$7.00 against Sells Brothers circus for breach of contract."

"Yesterday afternoon just before the afternoon performance of their show at this place Deputy United States Marshal De-

Bost made a visit to the circus, armed with the proper documents, which provided for the attachment of the ticket wagon and the center pole of the circus outfit. Sells Brothers were shrewd enough to take in the situation at a glance and without further ado paid over the entire sum. Mr. DeBost says the bills paid him were all crisp and new and had never been folded."

The story in the *Times* said "\$7.00," but the amazement of the Marshal leads one to believe the sum should have been reported as \$700.

On circus day the *Times* warned the public "that a lot of crooks and pick-pockets follow in the wake of every big show and make petit thieving and robbing a business. It is not safe to go off and leave your houses unguarded. Marshal Doane says the police force is not large enough to watch every house and that the people should not depend upon them entirely. Of course the management of the show has nothing to do with these crooks who take advantage of their attractions."

Following circus day the *Times* carried a few brief reports.

"It is said that the street railway did make some money here yesterday."

"David Hayes and A. S. Jacobs were run in yesterday for plain drunks."

"Our hotels did a rushing business yesterday and last night were crowded to their fullest capacity."

"The United States court had to suspend its proceedings yesterday morning while the big show was passing the government building."

"Nothing of importance going on the justices' court yesterday. Show day ruined the business."

"Yesterday was a remarkably quiet day for a circus day. There were no disturbances of any magnitude during the entire day. Leavenworth is not such a bad place."

The peaceful quality of circus day may have been due to the warning the *Times* gave the public, but the editor was too modest to claim the credit. There was one piece of criminal activity reported by the *Times*: "Geo. Clark and Frank Gardner were arrested and placed in jail yesterday morning for 'shooting craps.' One had 10 cents and the other 15 cents."

Small sin was never tolerated in Leavenworth.

When Sells-Barrett played Atchison, June 11, the *Daily Globe* reported that, "The circus men say that Leavenworth is not much of a show town."

Maybe, but Leavenworth has had more

circus days than any other Kansas town.

On circus day in Atchison the *Daily Globe* fairly bubbled with circus news.

"The dullest time a town ever knows is in the afternoon of circus day, while the performance is in progress."

"The Missouri Pacific will haul the show about for a week. It goes from Atchison to St. Joe, and then to Falls City, Nebraska."

"Up to the hour of going to press, the police had not made a single arrest today. A number of suspicious looking characters, however, are being closely watched."

"It is generally understood that if a big man comes out to-night to announce a concert after the circus, he will be given the laugh. But those who give him the laugh will buy his ticket."

"Mr. Freeman, the press agent of Sells Bros., says his show will not stay in Kansas long. Times are not good in the state. The circus has done the best business this season in Kentucky."

"The men who have agreed to assist in egging the clown to-night if he attempts to sing 'Annie Rooney,' are requested to meet at Joe Thompson's office at seven o'clock for organization."

"The Sells Bros., who gave to-day the best circus parade ever seen in Atchison, and who own as much show property as Barnum, are Kansas men. They are highly esteemed citizens of Topeka."

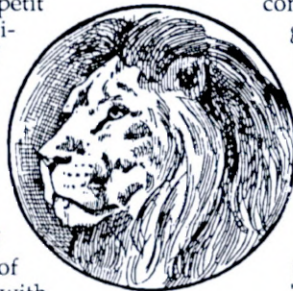
"The Sells circus parade was conspicuous for the absence of scrawny women."

"What has become of the \$10,000 beauty who used to travel with shows? We long for a sight of her wobbling along the street on the back of an elephant."

"The old fashioned child who knew all about the old fables is no longer here. Not one child in ten of those on the streets this morning knew the story of half the nursery rhyme floats in the parade."

"You have all heard of the fortunate newspaper man who has circus tickets given to him. We know one who had thirty this morning, who will buy one for himself at the wagon to-night, in order to get in. He is one of your cheerful chumps who is easily worked."

The following report is probably the work of the circus press agent: "This has been a profitable circus day for all concerned. The Messrs. Sells did well, the merchants did well, and the people who came to town saw an excellent show. We hear everywhere that the performance was particularly good; there were many old features, of course, which is inevitable, but there were many more new ones, and the circus company is believed to be the largest that ever visited Atchi-





son. All the other departments were above the average, and the management was everything that could be desired. There will be many additional features at the performance to-night, with prospect of very good weather."

Following circus day the *Globe* had news of a different sort to report: "Only one man, and he a country man, complained to the police that he had been robbed yesterday. He had given a \$20 bill in payment for a ticket, and claimed to have only received change for \$10 in return. He did not discover his mistake for two hours and nothing could be done about it."

"At the circus yesterday Dr. Holland had his pockets picked. Between \$6 and \$7 was taken. After the circus was over, and during the jam at the entrance, a man cut a hand bag belonging to Mrs. Newell Todd, from its fastenings and made away with it. The bag contained a purse and about \$35 in money."

"While standing around the ticket wagon of the circus yesterday, Marshal Tofte saw a woman produce over \$200 in buying a 50 cent ticket. Some people never will get any common sense."

"Testing a man's endurance: sitting through a circus concert."

The *Globe* reported the good and the bad, but the good far exceeded the bad, unless one happened to be the victim.

\*\*\*\*\*

W. C. Coup's Equescurriculum with Prof. Buckley's 16-Educated Horses-16, returned to Kansas in 1890 for a few dates, including Goodland, Mankato, Belleville and Horton, all served by the Rock Island Lines.

A small ad, two columns by about two inches appeared on the front page of the *Goodland News* on May 3 heralding the exhibitions of July 7 and 8, at the opera house. The ad carried no illustrations. A handout on another page announced, "A special matinee will be given on Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock for ladies and children."

"This company travel in their own special cars, carrying 18 artists, including a brass band and orchestra, 16 of the hand-somest and best educated horses in the world, the \$5,000 performing dogs, the oriental juggler, a car load of properties and wardrobe. Watch for the novel street parade each day at 11:30 a. m."

The handout continued, quoting the St. Paul, Minnesota *Pioneer Press* and concluded with an inventory of the horses' performance.

"They danced jigs, did sums in arithmetic, buckled clothes, rang bells, got the mail, went fishing, smoked pipes, erased figures from a blackboard, distinguished colors, rode rocking horses, went through

a military drill and wound up by fighting a battle."

The program, with slight modification, was identical to that of the previous season.

The *News* invited those living out of town to "secure their seats by mail by addressing the manager of the opera house." Tickets were offered at "Popular Prices."

Following the stand, the *News* ran the following review: "A Good Show."

"Next to a white man is a horse, and the horse fully demonstrated this fact at the opera house Monday and Tuesday nights in the entertainment given by W. C. Coup with his wonderful horses and dogs. There were sixteen horses, the pony Jip and Peck's bad boy in the shape of a small but very clever mule. The show was given as per advertisement which is something rare in these days of humbug, and many and marvelous were the tricks performed by the horses. The house was well filled both nights and at the matinee Tuesday, and every one well pleased. The music was good and in fact all of it was tip top. Goodland people can appreciate a good and show and will patronize it, but the snide 'aggregations' that sometimes light down upon us will yet the cold shoulder. Their next stop will be Norton."

Heralding the exhibitions of July 11, the *Jewell County Review*, Mankato, ran a two column ad with four engravings, the largest of which showed the horses carrying their books to school. One illustration was a tableau showing the horses in a line with their heads across the neck of their neighbor. The two remaining cuts showed the horses with canons on their backs preparing for battle and a final scene of "dead" horses before the parapet of the defenders.

The ad concluded with the warning "The Only Show of the Kind in the World. The Chance of a life-time Gone if you Fail to See it." There is no information on how many citizens took the "Chance."

Coup billed Belleville for exhibitions in Powell's opera house on July 12, and the 14th. Sunday was a day of rest. Monday was evening only, but two shows were scheduled for Saturday. A handout in the

*Telescope*, July 11, claimed that, "This company closed a most successful engagement of three weeks at Denver to over 60,000 people during their stay. They have played in all the large cities from Maine to California and are endorsed by the Clergy and School Superintendents as the most instructive and amusing entertainment ever given."

The *Republic County Press*, Belleville, following the exhibitions, reported that, "Prof. Coup gave three exhibitions of his trained horses and dogs at Powell's opera house the past week which was well attended and from its novelty and the great intelligence exhibited by the animals proved one of the most interesting entertainments given our people this season."

Ad from the Horton *Headlight* July 17, 1890. Kansas State Historical Society.

Coup played under canvas at Horton on July 19 for two performances. An advertisement in the *Commercial* clearly stated that the Equescurriculum was "Positively the largest attraction that will appear in the county this season." On August 16, the circus of Cooper, Fulford &

Company exhibited in Horton. Fulford was certainly a larger show, but it is doubtful that its quality compared favorably with Coup's aggregation.

The ad noted a feature not previously mentioned, "The SMALLEST HORSE IN THE WORLD, Nora, weighing 98 pounds, 22 inches high and being only four years old."

Of greater interest was "Note Our Prices—Admission, 25 Cents."

"Coup's Equescurriculum was in Horton Saturday as advertised, and gave two entertainments to big crowds," according to the *Commercial*, July 24. "In the evening the tent was literally packed. While the show is very good its reputation and name is bigger."

The Horton *Headlight* reported that, "Coup's horse show drew out a tent full of people Saturday afternoon and evening; and everybody seemed well pleased with it. The concert (?) after the horse show was very rocky, but it did not catch many suckers."

Where Coup went following Horton is unknown.

Research funded in part by grants from Wolfe's Camera & Video, Topeka, Kansas.

## HORTON, KANSAS

The Largest Attraction that will Visit Horton

Saturday, July 19, Afternoon and Evening

UNDER CANVAS  
The W. C. Coup Equescurriculum.  
NO POSTPONEMENT. DATE POSITIVE.



Prof. Buckley's 16 Educated Horses  
Who do Everything but Talk.



THE \$5,000 PERFORMING DOGS. ORIENTAL JUGGLERS. MUSICAL ACTS. BRASS BAND AND ORCHESTRA. AND TWO CAR-LOADS OF PROPERTIES AND WARDROBE.

Grand Novel Street Parade at 11:30 a.m.  
Note Our Prices—Admission 25 Cents.



# Mike Martin's CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

## 3 CIRCUS VIDEOS - BRAND NEW FOR '92!

### 1. "MUD SHOWS VOL. 2"

From the "Glory Days" of the recent mud show era comes more great color footage of these favorite shows:

- GEO. MATTHEWS • KELLY-MILLER • CARSON & BARNES
- CLYDE BEATTY • TOBY TYLER • CRISTIANI BROS.

**TWO FULL HOURS ----- \$27.50 POST PAID**

### 2. "RINGLING/BARNUM VOL. 3"

More marvelous B&W and COLOR footage covering the best of the "Big Top" years — and much more!

- SARASOTA QUARTERS IN THE 30's, 40'S AND 50's
- INTERVIEWS WITH J.R. NORTH & ANTOINETTE CONCELLO
- REHEARSALS IN VENICE
- FABULOUS "SPECS" OF THE RED & BLUE UNITS
- GORGEOUS DOLLY JACOBS ON ROMAN RINGS

**TWO FULL HOURS ----- \$27.50 POST PAID**

### 3. "92 SARASOTA CIRCUS FESTIVAL"

Highlights of all the fun and circus excitement of Sarasota's 7th annual circus celebration!

- BIG TOP PERFORMANCES - WITH INTERNATIONAL ACTS
- FABULOUS OUTDOOR AERIAL & GROUND THRILL SHOWS
- OLD FASHIONED CIRCUS STREET PARADE IN SARASOTA

**TWO FULL HOURS ----- \$27.50 POST PAID**

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

# CIRCUS HOBBY HALL

Dept. BW  
11950 107th Ave. N.  
Largo, Fl 34648  
Fla. residents add  
7% Sales tax



# \* POSTER \*

## EXTRAVAGANZA



An auction of 500 original posters,  
which will include 71 rare circus posters,  
*63 of which are pre-WWI Strobridge-printed one-sheets.*

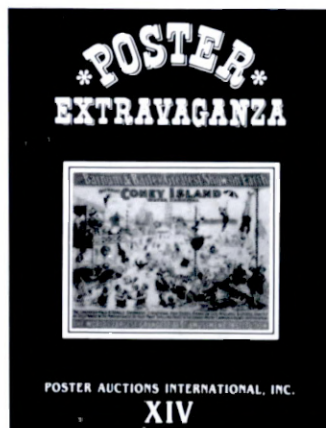
**SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1992, from 10:30 a.m.**

### VIEWING:

Friday and Saturday,  
May 1 and 2,  
from 9am to 9pm.

### AT:

The ballroom of  
the Diocese of the  
Armenian Church,  
2nd Avenue at 34th  
Street, New York City.



**CATALOGUE:** A hardcover, 144-page book, fully illustrates and annotates each of the 500 posters, with 180 in color. Text by Jack Rennert. Book purchase is necessary for admission to sale on Sunday. Send \$40ppd to Poster Auctions International, Inc., 37 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10023. Tel (212) 787-4000. Fax (212) 877-2347. The auction book will be ready for shipment on March 30.

